# LA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES RECEIPTS

DATE: February 26, 1993
RECEIPT FOR RED DRUM REPORT AND COMMISSION RESOLUTION.
1. SENATE PRESIDENT (State Capitol/Senate Sub-Basement)  RECEIVED BY: Janhan Classe
FOR SENATOR SAMUEL NUNEZ, SENATE PRESIDENT
2. HOUSE SPEAKER (State Capitol/1st Floor)
RECEIVED BY: Opnific ansardi
$\mathcal{J}$ $\mathcal{J}$ FOR REPRESENTATIVE JOHN ALARIO, HOUSE SPEAKER
3. SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE (State Capitol/Senate Sub-Basement)  RECEIVED BY: (Jankse) Capar
CHAIRMAN, SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
4. HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE (State Capitol/10th Floor)
RECEIVED BY: <u>Avolyn Williami</u>
FOR REPRESENTATIVE SAM A. THERIOT, CHAIRMAN, HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE



Joe L. Herring Secretary Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Post Office Box 98000 Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000 (504) 765-2800

Edwin W. Edwards Governor

February 26, 1993

Honorable Sam Theriot, Chairman House Natural Resources Committee Post Office Box 44486, State Capitol Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Honorable Samuel Nunez, President of the Senate Post Office Box 94183, State Capitol Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Honorable John Alario Speaker of the House Post Office Box 94062, State Capitol Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Chairman Senate Natural Resources Committee Post Office Box 44183, State Capitol Baton Rouge, LA 70804

### Gentlemen:

Pursuant to R.S. 56:6(27), enclosed herewith please find the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission's annual red drum report to the legislature, which consists of the following:

- 1. The Department's Second Annual Report to the Commission on the Status of Red Drum, dated February 18, 1993; and
- 2. A commission Resolution passed at the February 25, 1993 Special Meeting of the commission which contains within it the commission's recommendation relative to game fish status.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Joe L. Herring, Secretary Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries



Joe L. Herring Secretary Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Post Office Box 98000 Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000 (504) 765-2800

Edwin W. Edwards Governor

February 4, 1993

Honorable Sam Theriot
Chairman, House Natural Resources
Committee
P. O. Box 44486
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Dear Rep. Theriot:

Enclosed is the Second Annual Report on The Status of Red Drum. The Commission is obligated, by R.S. 56:6(27) and HCR 277 of the 1991 Regular Session, to provide a report on red drum to the Legislature. This report was developed by Department biologists to fulfill that requirement.

If you have any questions about this report, please let me know.

Sincerely yours,

Bert Jones

Chairman

Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

bj:jwa

attachment

cc: Senator Samuel Nunez, President of the Senate Representative John Alario, Speaker of the House Honorable Oswald Decuir, Chairman, Senate Natural Resources Louisiana Prepared for me.
Herring's signature

Joe L. Herring Secretary

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Post Office Box 98000 Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000 (504) 765-2800

Edwin W. Edwards Governor

February 25, 1993

Honorable Sam Theriot Chairman, House Natural Resources Committee P. O. Box 44486 Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Dear Representative Theriot:

Enclosed is the Second Annual Report on the Status of Red Drum. Also enclosed is a resolution pertaining to the Commission's recommendation on gamefish status for red drum. As you are aware, the Commission is obligated, by R.S. 56:6(27) and HCR 277 of the 1991 Regular Session, to provide a report on red drum to the Legislature. This report and resolution were developed to fulfill that requirement.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Bert H. Jones

Chairman, Louisiana Wildlife and

Fisheries Commission

BHJ:sch

Senator Samuel Nunez, President of the Senate Representative John Alario, Speaker of the House Chairman, Senate Natural Resources Committee

### DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

## Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

In accordance with the emergency provisions of R.S. 49:953(B), the Administrative Procedure Act, R.S. 49:967 which allows the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to use emergency procedures to set the furbearer trapping season and the rules regulating it, and R.S. 56:260, the 1992-93 trapping season is hereby extended for 31 days in the southeastern part of Louisiana as follows:

The thirty-one (31) day extension for the trapping of furbearers by licensed trappers shall be:

The area that will remain open is bordered on the west by the western boundary of Terrebonne Parish to U.S. Highway 90, then west along U.S. Highway 90 to the east guide levee of the Atchafalaya Basin, then north to Interstate 10. The northern boundary is Interstate 10 east to Baton Rouge, then east on Interstate 12 to Slidell, then east on Interstate 10 to the state line.

The extension of this trapping season in the affected area shall be from March 1, 1993 through March 31, 1993.

Bert H. Jones Chairman

### SECOND ANNUAL REPORT ON THE STATUS OF RED DRUM

prepared for

Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission Baton Rouge, Louisiana Bert Jones, Chairman

by

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Marine Fisheries Division
2000 Quail Drive
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

February 18, 1993

### INTRODUCTION

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission in accordance with RS:56:6(27) and HCR 277 of the 1991 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature is required to prepare an annual report to the Legislature on red drum. The statute and HCR each require the Commission address three separate issues as follows:

- 1) Biological condition, profile and stock assessment
- 2) Total allowable catch with probable allocation scenarios
- 3) Detailed explanation of whether or not gamefish status should be continued.

This document is prepared by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to provide the Commission with the information needed to fulfill their obligation as stated above. This report addresses each issue individually and uses the best data available to the Department at this time. "Biological Condition" has been interpreted as "Status of the Stock" and is based on information in the biological profiles and stock assessment, so it is placed at the end of that section.

# PROFILE, STOCK ASSESSMENT AND BIOLOGICAL CONDITION

A detailed review of the profile and stock assessment, "A Profile and Stock Assessment for Red Drum Sciaenops ocellatus, in Louisiana" was prepared by the Department in May, 1991. This report updates that document and last year's

report to the Legislature with additional data.

### **Biological Profile**

The basic biological profile of the species was described in the draft "Biological and Fishery Profile of the Red Drum in Louisiana" by Hoese et al., which was presented to the Louisiana Legislature in May, 1991. Two studies, described below, have provided additional data since that time.

Wilson et al. (1992 and personal communication) provided additional data on adult red drum from purse seine samples offshore. Aged samples of red drum captured by purse seine first aroused concern in the mid-80's about the status of the offshore stock by noting the relatively low number of young and middle-aged fish in these samples. The data from recent years show significantly increased numbers of younger fishes (< age 9) in the offshore schools sampled by purse seines. Wilson et al. (1992) noted that this increased occurrence of younger fish independent from the occasional schools of very young fish (average school age < 9) seen in some years. The 1985 and 1987 year-class fish seem to be especially prominent in recent data, suggesting strong recruitment to the offshore population of fish spawned in 1985 and 1987 (Figures 1 and 2). The exact magnitude of these year-classes will probably not be known for some time. since they may still not be fully available to the purse seine gear. Age at full recruitment to the gear is uncertain, but may be 6 - 10 years.

Data on recruitment of juveniles into the Louisiana estuaries was developed by the Department's Finfish Monitoring Program (Figure 3). Initial estimates of recruitment for young-of-the-year juveniles, only a few inches long, are provided each fall by seine samples. Trammel nets sample juveniles just over one year old, very near the time they enter the recreational fishery. These independent estimates are generally well correlated.

Recent estimates of recruitment have shown strong differences between year classes. The initial estimates for the 1989 year class in seine samples during the Fall of 1989 indicated low recruitment. Numbers of age 1 fish in 1991 (1989 year-class) were also below average in trammel net samples. These low catch/effort indices were also reflected in reduced recreational catch for this cohort.

This year-class was followed by one of the strongest yet seen in the monitoring program, which began in 1986. By the fall of 1992, the 1990 year-class fish averaged 20-24 inches and 3-5 pounds. Recreational fishing success provided by this cohort was significantly better than average in the 1991-1992 fishing year (September 1991-August 1992), according to information provided by the National Marine Fisheries Service ongoing Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey (MRFSS). This increased success was predicted in the report provided last year to the Legislature. In 1993, this cohort should provide increased availability of larger (5 - 10 lb.) fish. However, this size fish typically represents a relatively small portion of the overall recreational harvest.

Initial (seine) estimates of the 1991 year-class indicated a year-class strength near average. Recent (October-December 1992) trammel estimates indicate a higher year-class strength than the seine estimates. This may have been due to increased survival over the mild winter of 1991-1992, or due to normal variation between the sampling regimes.

Seine samples from the fall of 1992 provide the first estimate of the 1992 year-class strength. The data from these samples suggest that the 1992 year-class may be below average. Based on this assessment of the year-class strength, numbers of available fish 16-19 inches TL will be reduced in the 1993-1994 fishing year.

### **Stock Assessment**

Prior the Department's to development of an assessment of Louisiana's red drum stock, the most recent assessment for red drum was a gulfwide assessment provided by Goodyear (1989). While the data summaries for his assessment have been updated (Goodyear 1990, 1991), the underlying assessment has not been reaffirmed since 1989. update of his gulf-wide assessment is expected during 1993. Goodyear's assessment is based on the assumption that the offshore purse seine data accurately represents the offshore age structure. His interpretation of the results is that a significant decline in recruitment to the offshore population occurred in the mid 1970's. He was unable to fully explain the cause of this decline but did in part attribute it to increased harvest levels of juvenile red drum during the mid to

late 70's in estuarine or inshore areas. His assessment is similar in concept to the first scenario of the Department's analysis.

### 1992 Assessment Methodology

In the report presented to the Commission in 1992, the Department developed potential two scenarios describing the status of the red drum stock in Louisiana. Scenario 1 used the age structure of the offshore population, as suggested by the purse seine samples, to estimate annual recruitment of red drum from 1972 to present. This scenario was further separated into two options. The first option used the highest estimates of recruitment suggested by the offshore age structure to predict the population status in terms of recruitment, female spawning biomass and SSBR, while the second option used the lowest estimates of recruitment. Scenario 2 used constant recruitment the average at 1984-1986. estimated from The Department's sampling program was available to indirectly estimate recruitment during these years.

In summary, the 1992 assessment was simply an update of the May, 1991 assessment, adding two years (September 1990 - August 1992) of additional data and supporting evidence acquired since that assessment.

### 1993 Assessment Methodology

The methodology used in this year's assessment is virtually identical to last year; however, the assumption of full recruitment to the purse seine gear prior

to age 5 and constant recruitment to the population were not required because of the availability of recently collected data. Scenario 1 continues to rely on offshore purse seine samples to estimate the relative abundance of adult fish in the population. The 1991-1992 purse seine samples collected by LSU allows us to estimate the number at age of adult fish based on the 1986 cohort at age 5. This is a distinct advantage over the previous assessment which relies on ages 2 to 4 year old fish being fully available to the purse seine gear. It is more reasonable to assume that age 5 fish, which are mature, are more available to the gear. Scenario 2 no longer relies on constant recruitment.

The current assessment uses catch per effort by trammel nets from the Department's finfish monitoring program to calculate fishing mortality of age 1 fish for the 1986 cohort, and to estimate recruitment in Scenario 2 for 1987-1991. Recruitment estimates for both scenarios are developed by use of an age-structured analysis (VPA) for 1972-1985. The VPA for Scenario 1 is based on the occurrence of red drum from the 1991 purse seine data in relation to the occurrence of the In contrast, recruitment 1986 cohort. estimates in Scenario 2 are developed by using the fishing mortality rate for age 5 fish in the 1986 cohort as a terminal fishing mortality rate for 1972-1985. Recruitment estimates for each scenario are presented in Figure 4. scenarios a Ricker spawner/recruit curve is developed to project recruitment into the future to further evaluate the impact of fishing on the population (Figures 5 and 6).

### **Biological Condition** (Status of the Stock)

The results of Scenarios 1 and 2 are depicted in Figures 7 and 8. The figures show the impact on spawning stock biomass per recruit (SSBR) under two different conditions: A) fishing continued at current levels, B) a complete closure of all fishing beginning September 1, 1992.

Simulations of future conditions under both Scenario 1 and 2 indicate that under current rates of fishing mortality, spawning biomass will increase over time. There is still uncertainty, however, as to whether Scenario 1 or Scenario 2 depicts the actual current status of red drum in Louisiana or whether neither scenario is completely accurate. We choose to view both Scenario 1 and Scenario 2 as possible based on available data at this time, and can offer no further resolution until additional data support either scenario. In either case, SSBR of females in 1992 is approximately 40% of the average biomass under unfished conditions. The major difference between the scenarios is that spawning biomass under Scenario 1 is estimated to be about 69% of that estimated under Scenario 2. For example, under Scenario 1, 1992 spawning biomass of females is estimated as 24 million pounds. Under Scenario 2, 1992 female spawning biomass is estimated as 35 million pounds.

The Department, after a thorough review of all available data on red drum, feels that the results of this assessment and simulations of future conditions best describe the status of the red drum stock in Louisiana. However, an assessment is only as good as it reflects actual conditions. The status of the stock is

composed of two parts, one being the impact of current regulations on the future condition of the stock, and the other being the current status of the stock as resulting from past mortality rates. We feel confident that this assessment accurately impact of represents the current regulations and these regulations adequately provide sufficient survival to maintain the spawning biomass well into the future. We have less confidence in our characterization of the current status of the stock. The cause for uncertainty is the current status of the stock in relation to estimates of mortality prior to 1980. As in any assessment, there are a number of assumptions that must be made to develop mortality estimates. It is the accuracy of those assumptions that are critical to adequately characterizing the current status of the stock. We feel that further verification of the scenarios presented are required before any adjustments in total harvest can be recommended.

We are confident in the simulations of future conditions if the assumption of no change in overall fishing pressure is not violated. Increases in fishing pressure (fishing mortality) could come from many sources even though current regulations remain unchanged. For example, anglers could increase the number of trips targeting or harvesting red drum thus increasing the annual fishing mortality. More efficient methods of angling for red drum could be developed or popularized. New users of the resource (additional recreational anglers or increased by-catch mortality by harvesters) could enter the fishery. Due to such factors, it will always be impossible to predict completely the effects of current regulations on the future condition of the red drum resource.

Current regulations governing the recreational fishery (size limits and daily bag limits) control fishing mortality only indirectly, but do not control overall fishing pressure.

If fishing mortality remains at current levels additional studies in future years should allow a more precise estimation of the current status of the stock and consequently the allowable harvest. It is anticipated that after 1995 the uncertainty of which scenario is most accurate should be resolvable because there will be sufficient differences in the projected size of the offshore schools of red drum provided by each scenario. However, additional sampling efforts to measure the magnitude of the offshore population in 1995, such as the 1986 tagging study by Nichols (1988), will be necessary to detect these differences. We strongly recommend that the Commission and Legislature petition the National Marine Fisheries Service to conduct a study with the objective of measuring the magnitude and age structure of the offshore population.

# TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH WITH PROBABLE ALLOCATION SCENARIOS

The intent of this section is to provide guidance as to the allowable catch and predicted results of changes in allocation between the commercial and recreational sectors of the red drum fishery. At this time we recommend no increase in current fishing mortality rates on red drum. Given this recommendation, in order to allocate harvest to the commercial sector at this time, it would be

necessary to remove this harvest from the recreational sector.

There are an infinite number of probable allocation scenarios, depending on the method used to regulate either sector and the availability of suitable data. Given the available data we have reviewed two methods: A) an increase in the recreational minimum size limit to 18" total length; and B) the predicted impact of a commercial allocation on the recreational bag limit.

There is no reliable estimate of total allowable catch due to the uncertainty in selecting the most accurate stock condition scenario; therefore, we have supplied predicted allocation scenarios based on both of the stock scenarios defined in the stock assessment section (Scenario 1 and Scenario 2). It should be realized that allocation resulting from Scenario 1 would be the more stringent and would be the most biologically conservative.

The first approach increases the recreational minimum size limit from 16 to 18 inches total length. The predicted reduction in the recreational harvest is approximately 126,000 fish for Scenario 1 and approximately 230,000 fish for Scenario 2. If a commercial quota is implemented, it could then be all or some portion of the reduction in the recreational harvest.

The second approach to allocation considers the effect of setting a commercial allocation based on the current recreational daily bag limit. The MRFSS creel survey indicates there is harvest in excess of the current bag limit

which is represented by that portion of Figure 9 between a bag limit of 5 and 14. If there was complete compliance with the current bag limit, an allocation of approximately 29,000 fish to commercial fishery would be possible under Scenario 1 and approximately 56,000 fish under Scenario 2, without any change in the current daily bag limit. Figure 9 also allows comparison of many variations of a commercial allocation. For example, if a commercial allocation of 100,000 fish is chosen, the appropriate reduction in the recreational bag limit based on Scenario 1 would be to 3 per person per day. For Scenario 2, 4 per person per day would be acceptable.

The allocation scenarios presented here are intended only to provide guidance in estimating the impact of the allocation of a commercial harvest and again the results of Scenario 1 would be the most conservative of the two scenarios examined.

### **GAMEFISH STATUS**

The designation of "gamefish" as it relates to the current status of red drum is of little biological utility, but rather a social or political approach to the allocation aspect of management. Biologically, there is no difference between a fish harvested by rod and reel or that harvested in a net. The biological integrity of a fish resource is influenced by the number of fish harvested and the sizes (or ages) at which they are harvested. Size limits, bag limits and quotas are examples of biological tools typically used to control harvest and protect the biological integrity of a fish resource.

Gamefish status in and of itself does little to control total harvest or protect the biological integrity of the red drum stock, since it does not control the amount of effort expended or restrict the amount of time a fish is in the fishery.

We are not in a position to address non-biological aspects of gamefish; rather, simply to state that biologically, gamefish status is of little consequence as it relates to the present or future condition of Louisiana's red drum stock.

### REFERENCES

- Goodyear, C. P. 1989. Status of the red drum stocks of the Gulf of Mexico, Report for 1990. NMFS/SEFC Contrib. CRD 88/89-14. 62pp.
- Goodyear, C. P. 1990. Status of the red drum stocks of the Gulf of Mexico. Report for 1990. NMFS/SEFC Contrib. MIA-89/90-26. 23pp.
- Goodyear, C. P. 1991. Status of the red drum stocks of the Gulf of Mexico. Report for 1991. NMFS/SEFC Contrib. MIA-90/91-87. 23p.
- Hoese, H. D., D. W. Beckman, R. H. Blanchet, D. Drullinger, and D. L. Nieland. 1991. A biological and fisheries profile of Louisiana red drum <u>Sciaenops ocellatus</u>. LDWF Fishery Management Plan Series, Number 4 Part 1 (Final Draft).
- LDWF. 1991. A stock assessment for Louisiana red drum, <u>Sciaenops ocellatus</u>. LDWF Fishery Management Plan Series, Number 4 Part 2 (Final Draft)
- Nichols, S. 1988. An estimate of the size of the red drum spawning stock using mark/recapture. Tech. Rep. NMFS/SEFC, Pascagoula Lab, March 1988. 11 pp., 8 tab. 5 fig.
- Wilson, C. A., D. W. Beckman, D. L. Nieland, and A. L. Stanley. 1992. The variation of year-class strength and annual reproductive output of red drum, Sciaenops ocellatus, and black drum, Pogonias cromis, from the northern Gulf of Mexico and Age structure and reproductive potential of the northern Gulf of Mexico Offshore population of red drum not vulnerable to purse seine capture: the missing fish? LSU-CFI-92-2 CFI/LSU Final Report, 1990-1991 MARFIN Co-op Agreements NA90AA-H-MF724 and NA90AA-H-MF763. 40pp., 16 figs.

# PURSE SEINE AGE FREQUENCY OF RED DRUM 1990 - 1991

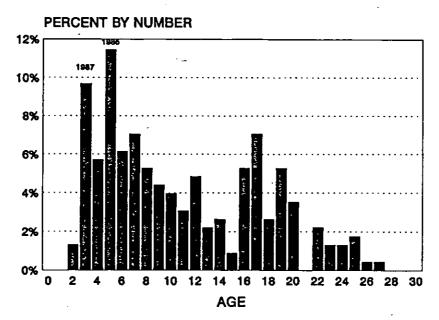


Figure 1. Purse seine age frequency, 1990-91. Data from Wilson et al. (1992 and pers. comm.).

# PURSE SEINE AGE FREQUENCY OF RED DRUM 1991 - 1992

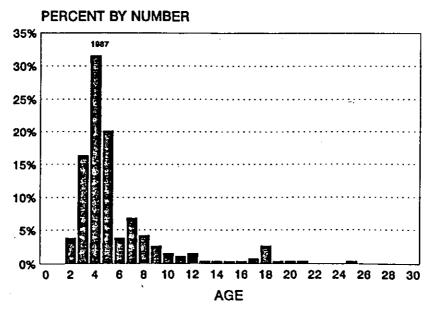
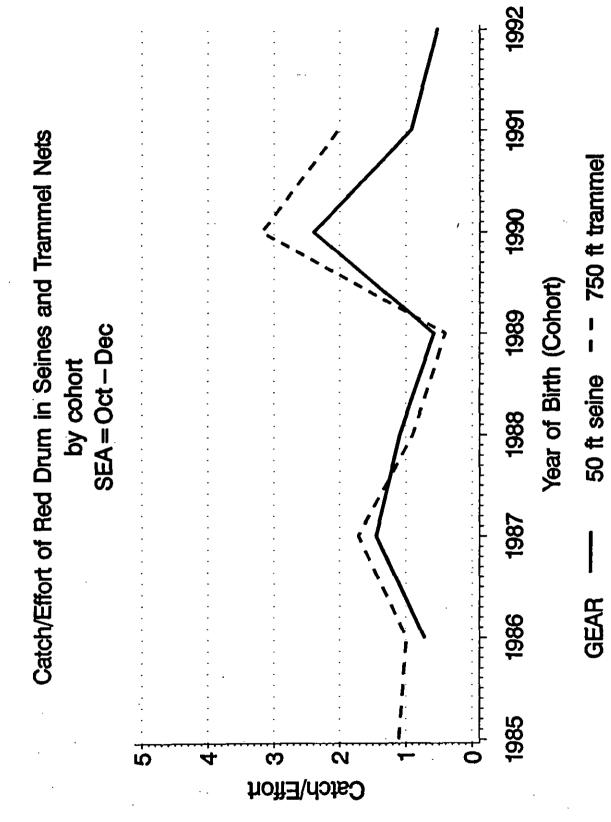


Figure 2. Purse seine age frequency, 1991-92. Data from Wilson et al., pers. comm.



Mean catch per effort of red drum in LDWF seine and trammel net samples. Figure 3.

# RED DRUM SIMULATED RECRUITMENT scenario 1 vs scenario 2

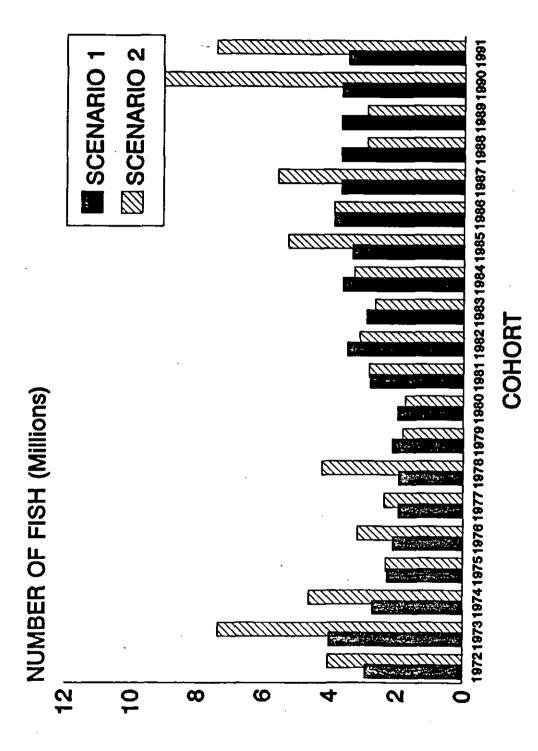


Figure 4. Recruitment estimates from Scenario 1 and Scenario 2.

# RICKER RECRUIT CURVE FOR RED DRUM SCENARIO 1

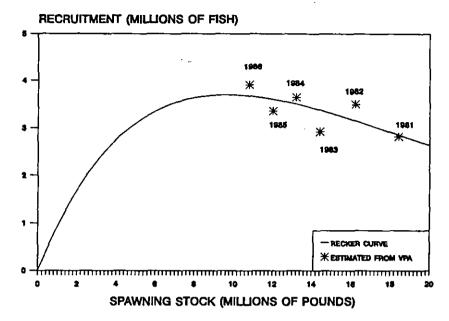


Figure 5. Ricker spawner/recruit relationship for Scenario 1.

### RICKER RECRUIT CURVE FOR RED DRUM SCENARIO 2

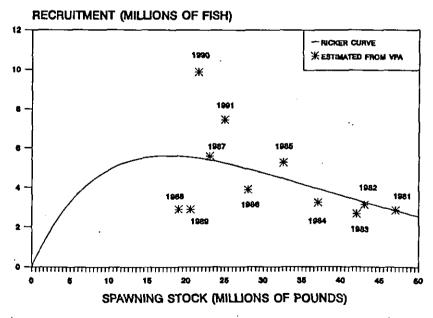


Figure 6. Ricker spawner/recruit relationship for Scenario 2.

# RED DRUM SPAWNING STOCK BIOMASS / RECRUIT

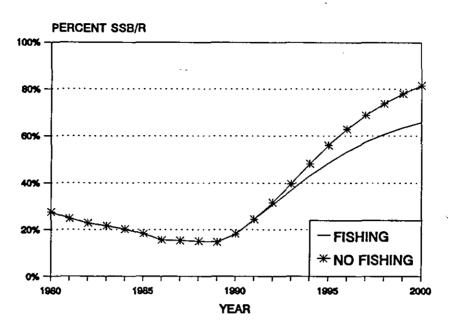


Figure 7. Spawning stock biomass per recruit for female red drum from Scenario 1.

# RED DRUM SPAWNING STOCK BIOMASS / RECRUIT SCENARIO 2

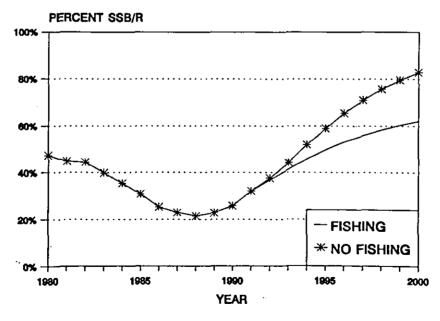
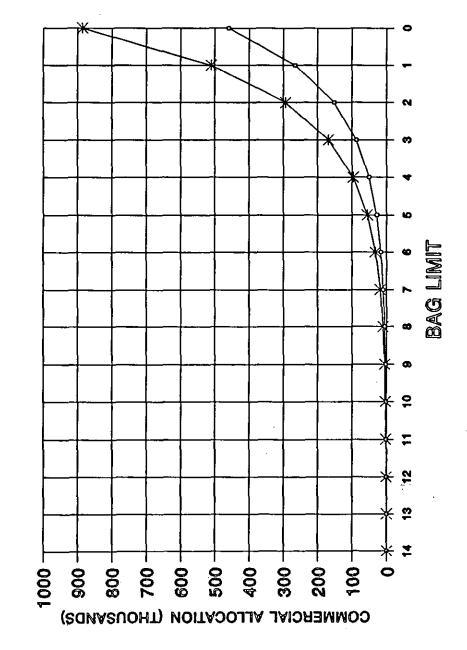


Figure 8. Spawning stock biomass per recruit for female red drum from Scenario 2.

# PREDICTED COMMERCIAL ALLOCATION BASED ON RECREATIONAL BAG LIMIT



- SCENARIO 1 \* SCENARIO 2

Figure 9. Estimated possible commercial allocation based on recreational bag limits.

### RESOLUTION

# LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

### February 25, 1993

- WHEREAS, this Commission, pursuant to R.S. 56:6 (27) adopted the Red Drum Report prepared by Department staff dated February 18, 1993, and
- whereas, that Report, while discussing gamefish status did not contain within it a recommendation as to the retention or removal of gamefish status for red drum, and
  - whereas, this Commission hereby includes such a recommendation to the Legislature to accompany and supplement the technical report prepared by the Department, and
  - WHEREAS, five years ago the Legislature declared red drum a gamefish subject to a three year "sunset" provision, and
  - WHEREAS, by Acts 1991, No. 157, the Louisiana Legislature permanently established red drum as a gamefish, and
  - WHEREAS, biological staff of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries have recommended no increase in current fishing mortality rate on red drum at this time, and
  - whereas, therefore the only way that an allowable commercial take of red drum could occur without an increase in current mortality rates would be to reduce the recreational catch limits, and
  - WHEREAS, it is the opinion of the Commission that such a reallocation of the red drum resources would not be in the best interest of the State from either a social or economic standpoint.
  - THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that this Commission hereby respectfully recommends to the Legislature that the present gamefish status of red drum be retained.
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission hereby directs the Secretary to have the appropriate staff members make additional studies including "catch and release" and "marine recreational surveys", which will enhance the Department's ability to evaluate this fishery.

Bert H. Jones, Chairman

Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries

Commission

Joe L. Herring, Secretary Louisiana Department of Wildlife

a Lerron

& Fisheries

# LOUISIANA WILDLIFE & FISHERIES COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING February 25, 1993

Chairman Bert Jones: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to call the Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Special Commission meeting of February 25th to order. Could we have the roll? I understand Perry is on the way. Not that there needs to be any introduction to this meeting, I think we are all aware since it is a single agenda item issue, but it was brought to my attention, being the Chairman of the Wildlife & Fisheries Commission, that the House Natural Resources Committee possibly thought that we may not be in complete compliance under Statute of our reporting to the Legislature. So, because of that fact, we so decided through our legal staff that we have a special meeting and address the issue as is. There are kind of two points here. About the same time it was brought to my attention that we may or may not be in complete compliance, it was also brought to my attention that there has been a discrepancy in the way that we interpreted the data concerning this report. So, since that probably will be the least controversial aspect of this I would like to get Mr. John Roussel to come up and address the Commission and give us an update on your report.

Mr. John Roussel: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Secretary, Members of the Commission. It was not really a misinterpretation, but I'll go through it in detail what it We had a calculation in one of the processes of answering one of the requirements of the report that was incorrect. That calculation had no impact on the report's representation of the current status of red drum or the future status of red drum. It simply had an impact on the possible commercial allocations that would result from reductions in the bag limit. If you recall, the report which is required to present probable allocation scenarios provides a breakdown of what type commercial allocations are possible with changes in the bag limit. It's presented in the report so that the final page of the report which is a graph has some slight changes in it and on page 6 of the text, there are also some changes. Again, these changes have no impact whatsoever on the report's representation of the status of the stock currently or the future status of the stock, but simply impact those probable allocation scenarios which are required by the legislation. If there are any questions or if you would me to actually go through in detail; the reports that you have in front of you have a new date on them, dated February 18th. The previous report that you reviewed at your other meeting was dated February 4th. So, the February 18th report which you should have in front of you has the new graph in it and also the changes in the text on page 6.

Commissioner Jenkins: Mr. Chairman, in light of what John says, I guess it's in order for us to move to accept the new report that's dated February 18th. That would include that one correction. Correct?

Mr. John Roussel: Correct.

Chairman Jones: There is a motion to accept the new report as has been corrected by the Department that was reviewed by Mr. John Roussel. Do I hear a second? Captain Pete seconds it. All in favor of accepting ...

Commissioner Mialjevich: How about some discussion.

Chairman Jones: 0.K., we'll have plenty of discussion concerning the red...

Commissioner Mialjevich: I'm concerned that the numbers he told us that we had in the state, but he hasn't explained to us why it changed from 29,000 to 60,000, why it changed from 125,000 to 56,000. All he said was there was a mistake in it.

Mr. John Roussel: O.k. The mistake was in the calculation and I'll try to be as clear as I can without confusing anybody. There is in the marine rec survey some data which reflects catches over the bag limit, which is currently 5 fish. In the previous report any of that data was used in a way to represent that the entire catch was an illegal catch. For example, if a person was interviewed with 7 fish, the allocation scenario assumed that 7 fish were illegally harvested when actually only 2 of the 7 fish were illegally harvested. So, the actual impact on the probable allocation scenarios is basically one-half. It's when it was all washed out. So, that's basically what it is. I didn't want to confuse anybody by trying to give too many details. I hope I didn't confuse anybody what that explanation.

Commissioner Mialjevich: That clarifies it for me.

Chairman Jones: Is there any more public comment concerning the clarification of the report and the changing of this data? Is there any public comment concerning this specific issue of the report?

Unidentified Man in Audience: Mr. Chairman, could we have Mr. Roussel site what changes on that original report was made?

Chairman Jones: Mr. Roussel, would you site those changes?

Mr. John Roussel: Yes sir. First of all, we have... Copies of the new report should be available today in the back. If you have a copy of the February 4th report. The specific.. O.K. O.K. It's available in the back and anybody else in the public who wishes a copy, contact us and we will gladly provide them with a copy.

Chairman Jones: Is there any other public comment or any comment from the Commission concerning this specific? Then I'll call for the vote. All in favor of approving the red fish plan or the report to the Legislature as it has been rewritten say aye. Any opposed. Mark that it has been unanimously approved.

Commissioner Jenkins: I would like to ask you another question. I know that a lot of people, including me, and a number of people I've talked to after the last meeting were apparently left with the impression that most, or the major or a great, great number of recreational fishermen consistently took over the bag limit on red fish. Could you tell me what comes out of that marine survey that would address that question or that bit of confusion that I've had?

Mr. John Roussel: Well, you used most, majority, and a great, great number. It's not, most of the people do not exceed the bag limit. The majority

of the people do not exceed the bag limit. Roughly, of the interviews conducted I looked at the last 4 years, anywhere from 1 to 3 1/2% of the anglers interviewed had over the bag. Now, when you extrapolate that over the total number of anglers it could amount to what someone may call a lot of anglers. But, percentage wise it's 1 to 3.3%.

Commissioner Jenkins: That answers my question for me and a lot of other people because I think the folks that I talked to went away with the impression it was at least the major, a great number, great percentage did that. I think, you remember I said I didn't think that was so, but anyway that clears it up for

Mr. John Roussel: Well, I apologize if I led somebody to think it was a majority. I don't think I used that word.

Commissioner Jenkins: You might not have, but that's just the way... Thank you, John.

Chairman Jones: All right, the report has been approved. If there are no objections, I think that since this is a single item agenda, that we go ahead and take public comment which basically pertains to the inclusion of the Commission recommendation to the Legislature relative to gamefish status of red drum. Does this procedure suit everyone on the Commission?

Commissioner Mialjevich: Can I ask a question first?

Chairman Jones: Yes sir, Tee John.

Commissioner Mialjevich: All right, we approved the red drum plan, the red fish plan for a second time just now with a correction. Right? We already approved it at the meeting at the beginning of the month. Was that original plan that we approved ever sent to the Legislature?

Chairman Jones: No sir.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Why not?

Chairman Jones: Our March 1 date is when it is supposed to be done.

Commissioner Mialjevich: So then, we don't have to send it until March lst. So, we just, even though it was approved at that meeting on the 4th, we just hold it until the 28th and then send it over.

Chairman Jones: Well, I think that ...

Commissioner Mialjevich: Because, we approve a lot of other things and bam, the next day it's gone. This thing looks like it got held back. Was there any specific person or reason other than it wasn't need until March 1st, that it was held back.

Chairman Jones: Well, I think there were a number of concerns. Specifically, one in which that you brought up at the last Commission meeting

concerning the status of the game fish, commercial fish aspect to the red drum.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Cause we had argued the point that it was in the legislative directive, in the law, and it was in the report yet we couldn't discuss it. At that meeting, which is already paid for by the citizens of this state, the people paid to come to the meeting and we paid out of our pockets ourselves to come to the meeting, now we've got a special meeting that cause an expense all over again because it wasn't discussed the first time.

Commissioner Jenkins: Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Jones: Yes sir.

Commissioner Jenkins: Tee John, you know as well as I do that there wasn't concerns about some accuracy in the report. It didn't have to be done until March 1st. I think the Commission has done the correct thing in coming up with an accurate report rather than an inaccurate report and just because it doesn't say exactly what you want it to say, doesn't mean we should have seen it. So, I think we are doing the right thing. I don't know what expense we have. Maybe a little bit. I know most of the Commission Members don't take per diem for travel. So, it can't be very expensive for us to come up here and do this again. Especially in light of the fact that the Oversight Committee has told us we need to do it. So, I think it's a mute question. We need to get on with it.

Commissioner Mialjevich: I would like to see proof they told us to do it. I'm a Commissioner. I don't have anything in my possession that says the Oversight said we had to do it. You have something you can show me. Do you have anything Perry? You, Captain Pete?

Chairman Jones: Excuse me, Tee John.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Well, I mean I'm serious.

Chairman Jones: I'll tell you what I'll do, Tee John.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Give me a copy of it, please.

Chairman Jones: Well, I have a letter written to me by Mr. Sammy Theriot and I will read it for you.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Good. Let's make it official.

Chairman Jones: The meeting is official, sir. This is addressed to Bert Jones. I received it last Thursday. Dated February 16th. I have been advised that Wildlife & Fisheries Commission will not complete its annual report to the Legislature on red drum by March 1, 1993. As you know, R.S. 56:627 requires the Commission to make an annual report to the Legislature no later than March 1st of each year containing the following information on red drum. A. A biological condition, a profile of the species and stock assessment. A total allowable catch with probable allocations scenarios based on the most current information available. C. A recommendation to the Legislature as to whether or not gamefish

status for such species should be continued and a detailed explanation for such recommendation. In order to avoid the controversy that arose last year concerning the annual red drum report, I would strongly urge the Commission to submit its report including all the information cited above by March 1st. I know that you will take the appropriate measures to insure that this report is completed timely. I am looking forward to working with you and the other commissioners during the 1993 legislative session. Thank you for your assistance in this matter. Sincerely, Sammy Theriot. And this is the same letter that I read to you on Friday when I called you up and asked you

Commissioner Mialjevich: That was over the telephone. I couldn't see it. Let me ask you a question. This was 2 weeks, in my calculation that would be about 12 days after meeting. So, Wildlife & Fisheries, somebody from this Department, not from the Commission, contact Sam Theriot and said we didn't discuss gamefish status and that's why he wrote this letter. Is that my perception? Is it correct?

Chairman Jones: I think your perception. Say it again.

Commissioner Mialjevich: My perception is, after the meeting on the 4th, in those ensuing 12 days between the 4th and the 16th, somebody from the Department contacted, from Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Department, contacted Sam Theriot and told him we had not discussed gamefish status. And so that made the report incomplete. And that's what brought about this letter to you. Am I correct?

Chairman Jones: I have the letter here. How he came upon that conclusion and information is not to my knowledge.

Commissioner Mialjevich: O.K.

Chairman Jones: But you can ask him.

Commissioner Mialjevich: O.K. I'll go along with that.

Chairman Jones: So, that's where we are. That's kind of an intro. So, being in mind, getting back to the original question to the Commissioners, since this is a single item agenda. Is there objection to having the public comments prior to. Then lets go that way. I know there are a lot of people here. There are more people here at this Commission meeting than there were at the last. So, obviously the word has gotten out appropriately. And so, if there's public comment, since there are a lot of people lets try to be brief, precise and to the point. And let's go.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Could we put a time limit of maybe 5 minutes on each person or something.

Chairman Jones: I'm the one with the longest drive. If it gets too long we'll figure it out from there. I'm the one that was down here Tuesday and the most convenient time would be Wednesday to have the meeting and as per your request we are here today and that's fine. So, lets go with public comment.

Please come to the mike, state your name and try to make it brief as I said, please.

Mr. Steve Shook: O.K. Mr. Jones. Thank you. Thank you to the Commission for allowing open public comment. For the first time in the Commission we've got a group of charter boat people here who are very credibility and knowledgeable. Many, many years of experience on the water. Total years, they can each get up here and give their testimony. We've got 168 years that we've been on the water and the area that I fish, I'm in the charter fishing business, I'm in Gulf Coast Fishing Charters down towards Golden Meadow, this is my neighbor here, but at any rate, prior to being in the charter business I was a commercial fisherman. I was on it both sides. I've played both sides of the fence so to speak. But I finally found the side that I wanted to be on. at any rate, in the early 80's, you know, I caught a great amount of red fish when they were in great abundance. Moving right along, but this past season I'm generally fishing 200-230 days like with the rest of the guides that are here. Doing so we've got a tremendous decline in redfish. This past season, 151 days, I've only caught 19 limits of red fish. That's all we caught in my charter fishing business. One hundred fifty-one days, 19 limits, fishing with live bait. Moving along, in the winter time, 71 days of fishing in winter time. I caught 2 limits of red fish, people. Its that much decline.

Chairman Jones: Excuse me, I come from the old school and it's kind of polite to allow the speaker that's being recognized to speak. We can do this one of two ways and I've said this before in public meetings. We can have you all walk outside and we can come in and state your public statement to the Commission and you not have the opportunity to hear them or you can be quiet and hospitable and listen and go from there. So, if you'll will bear with me, I will bear with you and allow the speaker to speak without being interrupted. Thank you.

Mr. Steve Shook: 0.k. Thank you Commissioner. Moving along, as far as credibility, I've been on the water for 27 years of fishing, fishing 230 days a year. All these guys that are here they can give the same testimony and I hope they'll get up and follow. We've got guides from the east and the west to tell you exactly what's going on. But in closing, I would like to say that with the combine experience and knowledge and all the credibility of 163 years of fishing of all these guides, over 1250 days of fishing a year, let them tell you. I'd like for them to follow one by one and let them tell you what they've seen and what has occurred with their charter fishing industry which is a great economical impact. So, are their any questions?

Commissioner Mialjevich: Do you agree with the Wildlife & Fisheries biologists assessment that the redfish are coming back?

Mr. Steve Shook: I'm glad you asked me that question. Being on the water over 200 days a year, I'm in the wrong house, but I can tell you. I see these biologists take and come out the pass, come out and run around the corner of the pass and they go where there's no fish. As far as their accurate assessments, I do not believe their assessments are correct, period.

Commissioner Mialjevich: If they go where there's no fish, then there could be 20 times as much fish as they say.

Mr. Steve Shook: They don't know what their doing. They don't even know where they're going. They are lost.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Well, do you conclude maybe we should save the state a couple million dollars are year and get rid of the biologists?

Mr. Steve Shook: Years ago, 3 or 4 years ago, I used to do marine survey. I used to get the federal and the state. I used to get survey field reports and I'd fill these report out continuously. Year after year. They stopped 3 years ago. Now where they meet us. They meet us at the dock when we come in. And they make their assessments and reports and talk to our customers. And that's how they are obtaining their reports as far as the actual catch. Read those reports. You tell me how much they're catching. You tell me when they take and open my ice chest and they count the red fish and see how many's caught.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Well, to clarify my thinking, you're saying that the reports of National Marine Fisheries and Wildlife & Fisheries Department are severely inaccurate.

Mr. Steve Shook: I can tell you what I seen being on the water. Both the commercial side and living there. I live there. I see it day in and day out. I'm on the water every day. I seen the impact from the freeze, from the 2 freezes of '83 and '89. I see it, I'm there every day. We're on a time element, I'd like to move right along. I'd like to get somebody from the west to come up.

Chairman Jones: Everyone here will have an opportunity to address.

Mr. Steve Shook: Thank you. Jeff Poe.

Chairman Jones: Well, I'll do the calling. I don't have much of a job. It's such a high paying job let me have this opportunity. Is there someone else that would like to. Yes sir. I like your hat.

Mr. Thomas Gonzales, from Delacroix, commercial fishing, born & raised for 55 years: You know to me, I'm listening to all this baloney. I fish red fish and when I quite fishing redfish when they closed it one me. And I been hearing all kind of baloney. I want to ask you an a personal question. I want honest answers. I want strictly honest answers. Are you married?

Chairman Jones: Sir, this ...

Mr. Thomas Gonzales: Well, I'm going to get to a point.

Chairman Jones: No, no. Let me get to a point right off the bat. This is a public comment period. If you would like to address in a public comment situation that will be fine. It's not normal procedure to interrogate the Commission about whether or not we are married. So, if you will go on about your public comments, I would appreciate it.

Mr. Thomas Gonzales: Listen to me for a minute. I asked a simple I like simple answers. I'm a married man. My wife's at home. don't know what's going on. So, how can a man tell me what's going on in another world of its own, going to tell me what's going on with that fisherman. He can't answer what's going on at his home. I like to know how he goes about it. That's the point I'm getting across. The Wildlife & Fisheries, because you'll got biologists. I had one already, I sat him down with the shrimp I made him scratch his bald head. And he couldn't answer me, but I answered him. Because I'm a commercial fisherman. That's my livelihood. I don't want to kill what I cannot I don't like to destroy what I can't sell and my kids futures. Wildlife & Fisheries is not run right and the problem with the redfish I blame it on Wildlife & Fisheries and the Senators of this state today. Wildlife & Fisheries knew so much about that fishing industry it wouldn't have let these people come from out of state and kill the spawning stock. daddy brought me up as a commercial fisherman. Never kill a bull drum or redfish. That we my breeding stock. And you'll let them do it, and know I carry the load, cap. I'm the one with the monkey on a back again. I can't make my living with the redfish. Now they turn around and give it to recreational. You know what it is on a commercial fisherman caught with a redfish. Mandatory jail, no less than 60 days and no more than a year. Now, you think that's a legal law for this country. The recreational violates the law, he gets caught with over the limit. they charge him a fine. The law of this country, whether its for me, for you, and everybody in this country. No for one people. And that's what's wrong with this country. The people looks at it one sided. I look at it for everybody. And that's what's wrong with this country today. They only looking for their pockets. They don't care about no body else but themselves. country, I'm 55 years old, and I will see a revolution in this country like it started and it's going to end like that again. Because the people of commercial fishermen are getting hungry now. They too proud to go on food stamps and welfare because that's a proud bunch of people. That's what they are, hard working people. You don't work hard, look at how you're sitting, behind a desk. Look at what I got, and I put in more hours a day than what you put in. I put 18-20 hours a day. you'll just sit behind a desk. You know, that's what burns me up. Right now I could take the redfish that I'm fishing with a seine, right now. I catch boat loads of red fish. I'd like to find that biologist. I talk to some of them that comes their with their net. They don't want to put their net around that fish. They say it's too much work.

Chairman Jones: Thank you very much. I appreciate your time. Next public comment. Yes sir. Mr. Corky.

Mr. Corky Perret: Thank you Mr. Chairman. For the record, and I'm one of the biologists, I'll take all the criticism you want to give. It won't be the first time. But, just to set the record straight, the gentlemen who just spoke and blamed this Department and this Commission for the purse seine fishery on the bull drum. That was a federal fishery in the EEZ. It has been, it is, illegal to purse seine redfish in state waters. It's been that way for a number of years. The fishery that took place was in the federal waters. I was a member of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. I'll take that part of the responsibility. Mr. Mialjevich was on the Council at the time. There was 17 voting members. So, don't blame them and don't blame the Department for the

fishery that took place in the federal waters. That's a whole other area of jurisdiction.

Unidentified Person: I want to tell you something. Sammy Nunez came to a meeting down in Delacroix and admitted to us that he allowed to purse seine to come here and give them the permit to catch out spawning stock.

Chairman Jones: Excuse me. Once again this is of a very controversial issue for a lot of you including myself. And if we are going to address the Commission and this Commission meeting we need to address it through the mike with your name stated so that we can have it in the record.

Mr. Corky Perret: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I just want to clarify that. That was a federal water fishery.

Chairman Jones: I appreciate it. I would like to clarify one point here. There are 24 hours in the day and I live them just like you do, sir. And I work very hard and I entered this world with an opportunity and what I have, I have made. I appreciate what you go and I hope that you will appreciate what I do. Now, do we have someone else to address the Commission. And I am married, 4 children, and I know what my wife's doing.

Commissioner Mialjevich: She's got her hands full then.

Chairman Jones: Yes. Is there someone else that would like to address the Commission on this issue.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Are you trying to say that you wife works harder than you?

Chairman Jones: Just, she is an extremely hard worker. Yes sir, please come to the mike and state your name.

Mr. Bo Weber: I was born and raised in southern Louisiana and I've fished just about all my life. I am 48 years old and I guess I've fished for about 40 of those years. In that time I made a few observations and I would like this group to bear with me because I think you all will agree with the observations. For example, redfish we've all caught over the years. And we've never had trouble as far as catching them or populations. Until, of course, the craze with blackened redfish came about. Paul Prudhomme did his job as a chef. He created a good meal and people went crazy over it. Well, that brought about the fishing of commercials for the redfish. When that took place, of course we all know what The stocks began to dwindle and as they began to dwindle the escapement was reduced. The breeder stocks started having gaps and, of course, the federal government closed red fishing in federal waters. In 1987, of course, the state closed the red fishing to commercials because there was no escapement taking place. None of the younger redfish were getting into federal waters so they could breed as they get older. At that time recreational limits went from 50 to 5. And that was an attempt to keep the recreationals from catching what the commercial couldn't catch. Now 5 or 6 years later when redfish are starting to make a very small comeback, commercial fishermen want to wipe them out again. You know, we talk something else about quotas. And quotas are wonderful if

somebody's keeping count. There was a piece in the paper about Mississippi, for example, their annual limit is 35 or 38 thousand pounds. We've already had 48 thousand sent back to Louisiana alone without regard for the rest of the country. One other thing concerning money. Recreational fishermen spend in the state about 700 million a year. When people fish for saltwater recreational they only fish for speckled trout and redfish. The great majority. We are asking, and I think that's the reason for this meeting, that we reduce the recreational catch from 5 to 3. If we gave 200 thousand fish for the commercial end of catching, if the fish weighed 5 pounds apiece, I mean that's a million pounds of fish. If it's a dollar a pound that's a million dollars. If it's two dollars a pound, that's two million dollars. Are we going to jeopardize a 700 million dollar industry for two million dollars. I mean the state needs money as we all know. The tax revenue on 700 million is about 28 million dollars. Are we prepared to give that up? Because that's what we will be doing. My personal feelings are if we are concerned about Louisiana and its resources then why don't we ban gill nets, completely. They are too efficient. That's not me talking. done it, Georgia has done it, California has done it, and now Florida is about to do it. These states have been their spec and reds devastate by gill nets. And in order to preserve what little they have left, they banned them. Why don't we do what is right and protect about the 50 thousand people who depend on the recreational fishing industry. I'm talking boat dealers, I'm talking sporting good stores, launches, gasoline stations, bait dealers, motor repair shops. Many, many more. Why don't we protect their futures and their families. Please ban the nets. Thank you.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the speaker some questions, please.

Chairman Jones: You would like to ask the last speaker some questions? Sure, go ahead.

Commissioner Mialjevich: If you would come back up to the mike, please. I don't see anything in my literature that says we gonna go from 5 to 3 fish for recreational fishermen. Do you have something I don't have?

Mr. Bo Weber: It's just a publication I saw of a letter which recommending if we drop from 5 to 3 and give those 200 thousand fish to commercials.

Commissioner Mialjevich: But, I mean we are discussing something's that not at issue here today.

Mr. Bo Weber: Aren't we discussing opening up to the commercial fishermen? Redfish?

Commissioner Mialjevich: Yeah, but not 5 to 3 fish. Second part, you say that there is 40 thousand pounds of fish went to Mississippi or something. What?

Mr. Bo Weber: Shipped back to Louisiana. That was in the Times Picayune.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Was that commercially caught fish or recreationally caught fish and sold?

Mr. Bo Weber: They didn't specify.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Didn't specify so naturally commercial gets 100% of the blame. O.K. You say that 700 million dollars a year spent by recreational fishermen. What percentage of that is saltwater fishing?

Mr. Bo Weber: I'm assuming one-half to two-thirds.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Do you have any data to back that up?

Mr. Bo Weber: Just in Louisiana. Research from Louisiana University.

Commissioner Mialjevich: So, as a matter of fact, it's just hearsay right now, then. Unless we have something to document it.

Mr. Bo Weber: Well, that's a study Louisiana University did for recreational fishing. It was just in the state.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Well, I know about the 700 million, but I never did see a breakdown of saltwater and freshwater bream and sac-a-lait, etc.

Mr. Bo Weber: Well, the easiest way that I assumed this was taking place is that the great majority of people live in the southern part of the state and by far the great majority are sports fishermen. Therefore, to assume that these people don't fish saltwater would be erroneous. So, consequently, it is very easy to rationalize that the majority of the fishermen in Louisiana fish saltwater.

Commission Mialjevich: It's hard rationalize something from too many assumptions. Anything thing you are saying that 50 thousand people depend on the recreational...

Mr. Bo Weber: Excuse me. Can I add something to that question.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Surely, surely. I don't want to cut you off. I want to be polite.

Mr. Bo Weber: Then if it was half, that's 350 million. Am I correct? From the 700 million that Louisianians spend on recreational fishing.

Commissioner Mialjevich: And they would only fish speckled trout and redfish? They wouldn't catch the flounder. They wouldn't catch croaker, wouldn't catch nothing else.

Mr. Bo Weber: Predominantly, sport fishermen fish for speckled trout and redfish.

Commissioner Mialjevich: O.K. You saying they've got 50 thousand people depending on the recreational fisheries in the state of Louisiana and you rattle off a name of a lot of place that I know that are frequented by, and equipment and supplies are purchased by commercial fishermen from the same places you named.

Mr. Bo Weber: No question about that.

Commissioner Mialjevich: So, I mean, these people are serving a dual purpose. So, how did you separate out the dollars on you was figuring what the recreational fisheries was worth. Say like, to a hardware store.

Mr. Bo Weber: I didn't figure the dollars, by the way.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Well, you said 700 million dollars.

Mr. Bo Weber: 700 million was figured by Louisiana State.

Commissioner Mialjevich: O.k. And they didn't break it down? They just lumped.

Mr. Bo Weber: Recreational fishermen spent 700 million. That's what they said. Not me.

Commissioner Mialjevich: And then the other thing you were talking about if there was a million fish at \$1/lb., 2 million fish at \$2/lb., well what's the ripple effect of that fish on the market? You didn't add up what it would be worth at the restaurant for the consumer to eat it. What it would be worth at the retail outlet for a person that's not a recreational fisherman that has a job elsewhere that wants to go and buy fish to eat. You didn't add that into the economic statement. It's kind of lopsided.

Mr. Bo Weber: See, Paul Prudhomme was interviewed very recently on T.V. in New Orleans and he said since the ban went into effect his business hasn't been hurt one percent and he's not served the redfish since then. Consequently, I'm assuming the restaurants haven't lost a penny since the ban went into effect on redfish because this is the man who started blackened redfish. Thank you.

Commissioner Mialjevich: So, all we have is confirmation that the restaurant people didn't loose any money. O.k. Thank you very much.

Commissioner Jenkins: Mr. Chairman? I would like to make a point here. I thought in the beginning we agreed to have the public comment and then the Commission discussion to follow. If we are going to cross examine every person for 10 minutes, we are going to be here for 3 days. I think it would be appropriate if we would let the public make the comments and then we can talk and ask questions if we want to later.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Can we call the people back up after and ask them questions?

Commissioner Jenkins: Mr. Chairman, would you go ahead and rule on that? I think we need to get on with the meeting.

Chairman Jones: I think this, Mr. Herring just whispered into my ear, that this is the time for public input and public comment, and that we, the Commissioners, are going to have plenty of time to do diligence on conversation

concerning this matter. We will have opportunity to discuss the issues. We can take notes if we so desire to bring up points of controversy or points of disagreement. It would be probably best serve this meeting and its framework to allow the public comments for our input so that we can consume them. So, the answer is I would prefer that we allow the public comment and go from there.

I'm with the Gulf Coast Conservation Association. Mr. Steve Shaddock: I'm the state secretary. I would like to go back and take a little bit of historical view, real quick. Gerald Adkins, Department biologist, reported at the Senate Natural Resources Committee a couple of years ago that the decline in the redfish population was a result of overfishing primarily by gill nets in the 1970's and 80's. He said that the purse seining that happened offshore merely brought the issue to the forefront, but there was an inevitable problem that was going to occur if redfishing was maintained at the levels that it had been in the 70's and 80's. I understand that the recent Gulf studies that have been done have shown that there is a direct correlation between years of freezes and years of really heavy commercial redfishing activity with gaps in the year classes which are offshore. So these two statements tend to support each other. Recreational anglers aren't all lily white. We certainly, I'm sure there are a few people that take over their limit and I think that there are certainly some gill netters who out there that are taking some redfish that they shouldn't be. The problem is that gill nets are an extremely efficient tool. Reporting is nonexistent. As I remember Mr. Harlen Pierce testifying one time on behalf of the commercial fishing industry that 90% of the commercial catch of speckled trout went unreported. How could this happen? It happened because we don't have any money or manpower or enough money and manpower to spot check the food processing houses or the fishermen on the water. And it leads to an honor system that the commercials are currently living by. They have to voluntarily report their catch. That doesn't work. The example cited about the 48,000 pounds of redfish imported from Mississippi versus the 35,000 pound limit, there is a good example. The 12,000 pounds of fish that were seized in the Louisiana seafood exchange, half of which were undersized, is another good example. A friend of mine is a restaurant tour in Lake Charles and he tells me he has been approached many times by people saying that they've got redfish fillets that you can pass off as snapper and that there is all of them that you would like. It simply doesn't work. Years ago, two years ago, the GCCA helped put a bill through to try to get a handle on exactly what was going on. We did this, it was called the credit card bill. That passed and it was supposed to issue a license in the form of a credit card where there could be receipts send to the Wildlife & Fisheries Department as well as Louisiana Revenue & Taxation, what have you. It didn't happen because there wasn't enough funding. So what we have, what we are faced with is an unregulated cash business with an efficient operating gear, operating on a black market, and it is out of control. I think if you add the loophole by making it legal you are going to compound the problem. While we are on the subject of enforcement, I understand that our area, we've got a few agents that seem to be, the numbers seems to be dwindling. I understand that we are looking at a \$1.2 million budget cut in the Enforcement Division. These people are overworked, they're underpaid, they've got tremendous responsibilities and to add a commercial redfishing industry into this situation would compound their They don't have the manpower. Again, it's not their fault. problems. cannot regulate what you can't count and you can't regulate what you can't control. In fact, the other thing that I was going to say was that the

recreational catch, when they looked at those 6 fish on average, people may catch fish but there has been an awful lot of catch and release going on now. the bass fishermen it is very popular and you've seen it with red fishermen. People are catching fish, they are letting them go. Our tagging program for the GCCA is doing quite well. People don't mind letting a fish go so that they can go offshore and spawn or can be caught again. But I suggest to you that if we have them netting that you are going to find that the amount of catch-andrelease fishing is declined dramatically. 'Cause who wants to let a fish go so he can go swim into a net. It's not going to happen. Therefore, the total catch, I think, of redfish will also increase. Going back again on what is fair. When redfish became a gamefish speckled trout were, an extra quarter million pounds of speckled trout were allotted to the commercial catch. Then black drum Again, it was the same type of thing that led to the came under pressure. redfish. It was spotter planes and they purse seined them into a lot of trouble. If you really look at the landings of what's happened with black drum, the commercial industry got the vast majority of the black drum allocation. we've got one good year class, 1990 year class, which as arisen to a marketable size and they want to reopen the fishery. We don't have enough data. We don't have the support. have got to get offshore. I'm sorry, the enforcement. We don't have the data and it's just not a good idea. Another thing, we're talking about economics and the LSU study came up. That LSU study was done strictly on speckled trout and redfish, as I recall. And, it was closer to a billion dollars of economic impact versus \$20 million and that did take into account the multiplier effect. To conclude, we don't know the status of the We can't monitor the commercial catch. We don't have the resources resource. to enforce what we do have on the books. Recreational anglers did not cause the problem. It was the commercial fishing and we should not be asked to further sacrifice. Finally, recreational angling represents the best optimal use of the resource. Thank you very much.

Mr. Pete Gerica: President of the Lake Pontchartrain Fishing Association. All these people are experts on this fishery, apparently they didn't read the same chart I read. The whole of the fishery was not cause, number 1 by commercial fishermen. I sat on the Red Drum A. P. Mr. Jenkins wasn't there, these people weren't there. Corky was there. A few other biologist were there. Mo was there. I don't see Mo here right now either. At that time, I said that they didn't consider one thing in the factor when they were saying that I killed, me, as a commercial fisherman and my people killed the fish, which they couldn't prove because the proof is now in your document. It was in the 70's and when we had spillway openings, we had freezes. The fish that were caught in the sound were caught by spotter planes who were targeting the fish for the boat that was catching the counter. Those fish that were caught were fish that swam directly from the estuary system which links it to Lake Pontchartrain, Lake Borgne, the Biloxi marsh. Not from Texas, now where else. Fish migrate south and north. They don't go east and west. Very little bit of movement east and west. let's clarify that. The commercial fishermen that kill all the fish. It was mother nature that made that hole in the species. I will not sit here and let people try to convince you all, but your mind's made up I know it already. can tell you whose mind's made up on this decision. Because I've followed this thing from the beginning. My family has been starving. The people that I fed fish too. They can't go buy a boat. They have been neglected the right to have redfish. If you'll all had your way they would be neglected the right to all

fish. Are gill nets efficient? Well, why not fish something, a fishing tool with a tag system where you've got to account for every fish that is caught. Why? Because they are hogs. They want it all. They want it all. Well, if they want it all, podnuh, they gonna fight and they are going to fight to the end because this guy ain't going to lay down. I can tell you that right now. I am so tired of people telling me, they all know so much how come they're not at any of these meeting. When I'm losing work, when I'm fighting this road for all the people that I represent. The poor commercial fisherman. The poor people who are in this business because of heritage. The Yugoslavians, the French people, the real Acadian's in this damn state. The people that deserve a part of this fishery had been denied it. I can go out there and sit on an unattended damn net and I've got to sit there and I can't take 5 redfish home that I caught on a pole which I've got a license that Louisiana sold me to fish with a pole. But I've got to throw them back because I'm a bad man with a net in the boat. That's not fair. That's against my constitutional rights. But the problem is nobody's tried you'll. The constitution gives us a right to fish. If it takes that, that's how it will be. So, make your decision up here but you will be fought by the constitution.

Mr. Ted Loupe: Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, ladies and gentlemen. I'm associated with Gulftide Seafood in Leeville. I'm going to see if I can't restore something back to this meeting. The meeting today, I believe, is to discuss whether or not we should keep gamefish status on redfish. No one said commercial people wanted gill nets back. We would be happy with a hook and line industry, if you wanted to know the truth. We would and there is a lot of them down the bayou that would. Look, let me tell you something podnuh, I'm gonna tell them with I feel. If you've got something to say, you get up here, o.k. Just hear me out.

Chairman Jones: Excuse me for interrupting. Excuse me, once again I'm gonna ask one more time, this being it, that we refrain from speaking while the speaker has the mike. Like I say, we can do this one or two ways. My way, which is have everyone in here address the mike and be quiet and the other way is if we can't refrain from that, we can all walk outside and one at the time come to the mike and speak. You have the mike sir, please go ahead.

Mr. Ted Loupe: The issue today is the status of gamefish on redfish. Right or wrong? That's what we are here to discuss. Let's first look at the recreational side. Numbers being used by these people are very misleading. You see, Steve, I was on both sides for 17 years I was a marine dealer. And now I'm on the commercial side. So, we've go some that's going on both sides the whole time, o.k. But 76% of the rigs that are sold in the state of Louisiana are bought in freshwater. And the other 25 or 30%, a good number of them are bought for offshore fishing which is bill fishing, tarpon fishing, and etc. So when you break it all down, it's not as big as it's projected to be or misrepresented. Let's put it that way. Let's look at the commercial side of this thing. There are some things that really bother about what's going on right here. We've got 50,000 recreational people who are going to be hurt if you'll go ahead and leave gamefish status on the redfish. Right? The recreationals will be hurt if they take it off. We've got over 30,000 commercial people that going to be hurt if you leave gamefish status on the redfish. In a few minutes I'm going to show you how. These are people that are involved in the shrimp, crab, and oyster

industries in this state. The reason I mention all these industries is because you cannot look at just the redfish because when we lost the redfish we also lost the black drum, the sheepshead, and other species along with it. My reason for bringing up these other two must be addressed along with the redfish because they have also been allowed to come back very strong since redfish has a gamefish status. Our big problem in this whole room today, we're walking around like a race horse with a pair of blinders on. No none is looking at the whole picture. Even you guides. As good as this gamefish status looks to you today, ten years from now you might be out of business. Because if redfish continue to come back like they are, who in the hell is going to need a guide. Larry? Vernon? You know as well as me they are lined up on Bayou Lafourche right now fishing every weekend out of pickup trucks. We never saw that as kids grown up. Why should I hire someone to go fishing if I can go park my truck and catch all the redfish I want. It's point and case. It's very misleading what's going on here today. My big concern with the whole thing is the impact gamefish status on 0.k. redfish is going to have on our shrimp and our crab industry in this state. John, I asked you previously, does Wildlife & Fisheries have any idea at all what impact this is going to have on shrimp and crabbing in the state of Louisiana. You talking about a 500 to 700 million dollar industry a year, combining both of them on the tail end. Dockside alone the shrimp industry last year brought in \$144 million in the state of Louisiana. Dockside. Right, recreationals are large but so are those industries there and they are going to be affected. You can't keep putting fish in a pond, fish in a pond, fish in a pond, and expect to have other creatures in it also. John? What? Still the same? Don't know? See what I'm getting at. We don't know what the final impact of this gamefish status is going to do to these fish and the rest of our industries. Just a few more minutes, Bert. Now, I don't want to contradict Steve any, but doggone it, Steve...

Chairman Jones: Alright, talk to us now. Talk to us. No, I said talk to us. don't damn us.

Mr. Ted Loupe: Here's an article of 12/3/92, "...and the reds seem to be taking every habitat. They are on shell beds, points where they're moving water, tucked in edges of marshes and all where small crabs and shrimp are working best." Bob Marshall, November 11, 1992, "I'm thinking of posting a few guards by the ramp with machine guns Dudenheffer said. That might be the only way we will be safe from these redfish. There are so many reds in the marsh they're are going to eat up all the minnows that come after us." Steve, you been fishing in the wrong place, bud! Alright now, just a couple of more articles here, Bert. Louisiana Sportsman. Just to qualify what I've been talking about for the past few months or as long as I can remember with the impact the redfish is going to have on other industries. I've seen their stomach so full of shrimp and small crabs that they are coming out of their throats. You couldn't jam another one in there. You continue to let those fish come back, come back, come back, other aspects of the industries are going to be affected. Another issue. Father's Day, June 21st, middle of summer when we shouldn't be seeing any bull reds along the beach. An acre size school of bull reds appeared out of nowhere splashing and thrashing the surface. Hundreds of them, back slicing through the still waters as they chased small crabs floating in pass. Another magazine right here. Louisiana Sportsman once again. "Cocodrie area. State fisheries, Gerald Adkins, biologist, who was called upon to verify the species also so surprised at the

location the fish was taken. Adkins estimated the fish to be 60 years old. That's a 61 pound bull red that was caught off of the Terrebonne area. How much crabs and how much shrimp can that one fish eat in a day. Sixty-one pounds. But during the month of June there have been several reports of hugh schools of bull redfish feeding upon thousands of baby crabs that were moving into the marshes." I'm not going to continue reading this. It's just verifies what I have been saying for a long time now. We don't know what the impact gamefish status is going to have on redfish by making it permanent. There's too many unanswered questions. You can't just look at this one fish. You've got to look at the whole picture. Just like these guys aren't looking at the whole picture. We need to drop back and punt. Look at this closely. I thank you'll.

Chairman Jones: Thank you. Next speaker, please. Do we have someone else that would like to address the Commission. Mr. John Roussel, under public comments? Come ahead

Mr. John Roussel: No, no. This is just to follow up to Ted's question which he asked at the previous meeting as you recall. I tried to do as much research as I could to find out if it could be answered. I can only answer that by saying that there are some studies that show redfish eats approximately 4% of its body weight per day. Now, to translate that into what impact it's going to have on shrimp or crabs, that's, I don't think anybody knows.

Mr. Jim Bourge: Gentlemen, I am from Abbeville. I have been sitting there listening to the various comments by the various groups. A lot of it, believe it or not, is irrelevant. The presentations on the 700 million dollar economic impact for the recreational side, the 500 million dollar economic impact for the commercial side. All of that is irrelevant. According to this Commission's statutory authority in the provisions, under 56:638.5, Section 5, explicitly states that conservation and management measures shall, where practical, promote efficiency and conservation and that no such measure shall have economic allocation as its purpose. These are the rules and regulations that our legislature gave to you'll. These are the provisions that you'll have to abide by in you'll work. It also explicitly states that anything that you'll do shall be fair and equitable to all fishermen involved in this state. recreational. Not just commercial. There are both sides. One thing that was said earlier. O.k. I would like to know where is all the supporting data that the problems pertaining to redfish are due directly to the commercial fishermen. I've heard these allegations made against us as commercial fishermen before, but nobody has ever presented anything whatsoever to show that we were directly responsible for it. I've just got one more quick thing to say, sir. The first two parts. I'm not a public speaker. The first two parts of the red drum report were submitted at the February 4th meeting by the Department biologist. However, when it came time for the gamefish recommendation certain commissioners used highly questionable tactics to prevent any discussion at all of the issue on the gamefish recommendation. This is a part of the red drum report. The red drum report was agenda item number 11 at this meeting. Therefore, could have been legally discussed, voted on in any manner whatsoever. Now, these same commissioners have called a special session, or special meeting today, to try and bail themselves out of trouble with the legislature and they expect the same commissioners that are sitting here, that argued with them for a good half hour about this matter, to bail themselves out. There is a third option besides I

know of the two recommendations. One is for the removal, or the investigation into looking into removal of gamefish status. The other one flat states leave things as is. But there is a third option. You'll can vote to leave the report as is, no changes, that's how it was voted on February 4th and let the commissioners there were responsible for what happened February 4th to be accountable for their actions to the legislature. I've only got one quick thing I'd like to present to you, Mr. Jones, if I may approach the...

Chairman Jones: As long as it is not a gun.

Mr. Jim Bourge: Under the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act 49:960 B, I hereby request the disqualification of Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Commissioner Jimmy Jenkins from voting on the red drum recommendation to the legislature on the grounds that he cannot afford a fair and impartial consideration of this matter. And the reasons are list, sir, as required by law.

Chairman Jones: Excuse me. This is a red drum comment period. But go ahead. You have one more minute.

Mr. Jim Bourge: I'm finished, sir. That is a formal request and petition to be taken, to be checked in to.

Chairman Jones: You'll have to ask him. I'm sure he will give you a copy. Mr. Puckett, you want this now? Next speaker. O.k. you can get it in a minute.

Mr. Mike Cazes: I have a little different perspective in regards to this proposed adjustment in redfish creel limits being discussed today. First, I'm not what you call a meat fisherman. I've have used nothing but barbless hooks for several years now and I keep very few fish that I catch that are of legal size limit. Most of them I release, the rest I tag. Most of the times, as a matter of fact, I'm fly fishing, so I'm really not out to catch a whole bunch of fish and bring them home. Therefore, the creel limit really doesn't affect me as to what I do bring home except for the fact if this measure's passed we'll be back to the same problems we've had in the past as verification of commercial catch and the enforcement of these regulations. If you just look at Mississippi you will see the problems they are having right now with this measure if it's Another point that needs to be examined is the effect of Hurricane Andrew in regards to the recreational fisherman. Now that many freshwater bodies of water are severely damaged we can expect to see many more fishermen who have previously been primarily freshwater fishermen, begin to saltwater fish. additional number of fishermen, if you add them to the unlicensed fishermen such as the over 65 group, the children and the military personnel that are not normally considered in the recreational numbers when everybody says 200 or 250 thousand licensed recreational fishermen, you see we are talking about a tremendous number of people. These additional fishermen also will be putting a severe dent into this, I guess you could call this gap the commercial fishermen are wanting us to take in reducing creel limit, to allow them to catch them. You are going to be seeing these guys now catching those fish. We are only 4 years into a proposed 9 year plan to study this redfish issue. Why not let it run its course then examine at that point as it is originally proposed? I've seen a report just recently that we will be seeing a decline in juvenile redfish in the next couple of years due to gaps in the brood stock due to the freeze of 1989. There were some gloom and doom predictions of restaurant closures and tourism and people not coming to Louisiana due to the fact we don't have redfish for them to eat. That did not happen. Personally, since I don't keep much fish, recently I was in a position, I had some friends from out of state who wanted to eat some redfish, I could not find any in town. I would like to have been able to buy those people some redfish and cook them for them. Therefore, I would be in favor of seeing a total removal of all nets from the waters in Louisiana and go to a commercial rod and reel fishery with a tag system for verification of the redfish. Thank you. By the way, I do have some numbers I got this afternoon from Karen Foote, the Asst. Administrator, Marine Fisheries Division, on the 1991 recreational catch of redfish. The 1991 recreational catch was 734,691 pounds of red drum. I would like to give this to the Commission members. It also shows the 1991 count for commercial catch.

Mr. John Roussel: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if I could correct that. That's not pounds, that's numbers of fish. O.k. I don't want that to be misrepresented.

Chairman Jones: Next speaker please.

I would like to thank the Commission for this Mr. Henry Truelove: opportunity to address you. I would like to make one point of clarification. Mr. Ted Loupe stated that the commercial fishermen of this state were ready to go to a hook and line fishery. Gentlemen, I represent commercial fishermen from fishing organizations to the saltwater people on the Governor's task force. I have not, at this time, heard the fishermen make a request to go to a hook and line fishery. I would like that to be entered as a matter of record. Gentlemen, for two long both the recreational and the commercial fishermen have suffered economic hardship. We have the resource mentality of a football game with winners and losers. The truth is if we would spend this energy on the resource itself instead of fighting one another, we could solve this problem. Gentlemen, the commercial fishermen of this state are seeing large numbers of fish. I think the biologist also with their reports are seeing large numbers of fish. I sincerely hope that the charter boat captains of this state find more fish. For if not, they are looking for closures and the economic impact of losing their business. They will know how the commercial people felt 4 or 5 years ago when they got shut down. It's hard to see your friends and relative loose everything they have and have to move to other states to conduct business. The rolls are full of people on food stamps and welfare. Gentlemen, we are here to basically use our God given resources to help the people of this state. We should be able, if we can put a man on the moon, to take these resources and manage them so that both sides benefit. I dream of that day. I see it at some point in time coming to mature. When we are fighting one another we are wasting energy. It's going in the wrong direction. We should be fighting the problem. I asked again, about every time this Commission meets, I asked again to restart the Saltwater Finfish Task Force which has not met since the current administration has taken office. I would very much like for you gentlemen to look into that possibility. Thank you.

Chairman Jones: Next speaker please.

Mr. Jeff Poe: I run Big Lake Guide Service in Cameron Parish, Louisiana. Well, earlier I heard some comments about Mr. Shook's ability as a fishermen over there. Commercial fishermen last year in the state of Louisiana, they caught 795,017 pounds of speckled trout. I mean this sounds pretty exact. that's what they caught. We had, we sold 900 licenses last year. That was at \$250 a piece. So, I assume most of them fished. That comes to a little less than, well I figured 1 3/4 gill net ought to average about a 2 pound fish. I'm not sure about that, that's just a guess. That comes to a little less than 500 fish a piece. Mr. Shook over there, I guarantee you caught more than 500 fish. I mean there is no doubt about it. I would say. I'm not sure how many commercial fishermen there are. I mean, I don't know how many are fishing speckled trout, in other words. I mean I wish we did have numbers to tell us what that is. But, if you start to allocate some redfish, I would hope there would be some method you could use to get some numbers on that. I read a copy here recently of a study that was done in Louisiana. This was done in 1975. They interviewed 629 commercial fishermen. 629 commercial fishermen caught 1,621,000 pounds of speckled trout. They didn't interview 737 fishermen. 737 fishermen that they didn't interview caught 78,000 pounds of fish. They had 29 fishermen in Lafourche and Plaquemines Parish and they were fishing 62,000 foot of webbing. They caught over a million pounds of speckled trout with 62,000 foot of webbing. In Cameron Parish last year in April, I counted 115 600/ft. gill nets. That comes to about 70,000 foot. Cameron Parish last year had 80,000 pounds of speckled trout. That's what was caught there. In 1975 in Cameron Parish there was 8 fishermen fishing 7500 foot of net and they caught 162,000 pounds of trout. Now, there was a 1/4 inch difference in webbing size then. They were using  $1 \frac{1}{2}$  at that time in 1975. Whereas now, they just. There's something wrong with those numbers. I mean, it doesn't go with what's going on I mean, we are seeing that much more fishing pressure going on now, 70,000 foot of webbing caught 80,000 pounds of fish. You got 7500 foot of webbing caught 162,000 pounds of fish in 1975. Either they are not reporting the fish, which I don't know whether they are or not, I'm not saying one way or the other. But somewhere there is a problem. Either we don't have the fish or they are not reporting them. One way or the other. It can't be both ways. That's about all I have to say. I do have a copy of that study if you'll would like to see it.

Chairman Jones: Is that it? Thank you sir. Next speaker please.

Mr. Bob Guilbeau: I live in Lafayette, La. and I own a restaurant called Prejean's there and I know Tee John and some of the Commissioners. I have friends in the audience that I do business with and I just want to tell you'll a little bit about my business and how it's been affected by the closure of redfish and speckled trout and some of the things I serve on my menu. Some of the things I do to make my customers happy. I've got a new chef, his name is James Graham and he come to work for me and he said, "Bob, listen, I'm from Montana and I do a lot of things with wild game." I said "well, you know, we can't serve wild game here." He said, "well yeah you can, you can get elk and moose. You can get duck. You know you can get lots of wild game from commercially raised farms." So I said, "o.k. go ahead and try," and he did. And people have really received it well. The wild game dishes are going real well and we've gotten quite a bit of publicity and press, favorably, for the dishes he's created with that. You know, they closed duck season a long time

ago, or they closed commercial duck harvest a long time ago and they closed commercial harvest on venison and moose and elk and things a long time ago, but they sell well. I'm glad I can sell them. I hope that I can sell redfish and speckled trout some day. I can't sell them now. My business is doing very well without them now. I don't know the answer to the problems that you'll have here, but I know the resource appears to be in trouble. I know the ducks couldn't take the pressure of a commercial and recreational harvest. I know the deer and the elk and the moose couldn't take the pressure of a commercial and recreational harvest. I'd like someway for it to work out where everybody gets the resource and I can serve it. You know. I hope that sanity prevails here and that we don't decimate a resource until I can't serve it any more. You know, it makes sense to me. I'm a rod and reel fishermen. I go out, I'm invited out with friends from all over south Louisiana and I go out and I catch a few redfish. I catch a few red snapper, a few speckled trout. Not a lot. I care about the resource and I ask that you'll be safe, sane and reasonable and if we make a mistake let's make it in favor of the fish. Not in favor of me. Don't make the mistake of saying well, in order to insure that Bob Guilbeau and his restaurant stay in business we have to keep redfish and speckled trout available to him. That's not true. I can find other things to serve and that's all I ask. Thank you.

Chairman Jones: Thank you, next speaker please.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission. Mr. Cornel Arceneaux: represent the 500+ member Louisiana Association of Coastal Anglers. Chairman, I will not be asking for 5 minutes per member. I presently serve as President of this 3 month old Louisiana organization. This is a non-paying position. Your recent record of conservation of our coastal recreational and commercial fishery should be commended. We are here today to encourage you to continue in your effort to put Louisiana resources and Louisiana first. At issue today is the possible recommendation by this Commission to take a step backward by recommending to the legislature that a commercial take of redfish should be allowed. The facts of that a commercial take is already taking place. Commendable efforts by the Enforcement Division on illegal laundering of Louisiana redfish through Mississippi have recently surfaced. There have been several accounts from our membership that redfish are being clubbed and destroyed when encountered in gill nets by some net fishermen. Our position is that the only way to protect redfish is that redfish remain a gamefish. Incidently, several other states have remedied the aforementioned abuses by removing gill nets from the water and even removal of redfish as a menu item. Gentlemen, our intent is not to impose an economic hardship on any Louisianian. hardships do happen, however. If national health care is passed as presently proposed, I will suffer a 25% reduction in income. My partner will literally be put out of business and will have to re-establish himself in another segment of the insurance industry. My point is, that many of the gill net fishermen are multi-commercial and also harvest shrimp, crabs, oysters and fur. An interesting statistic would be to find out exactly how many net only fishermen we actually do have and what is the economic impact to them and the state. Historically, gill net fishing in Louisiana has only become extensive with the advent of the monofilament net. Just as netting was phased in over the last 15-20 years, I suggest that this Commission direct a study on the economic impact of eliminating the gill net fishery and replace it with an historical rod and reel commercial

fishery. Redfish certainly should remain as gamefish until this type of information is gathered and studied. The out of state fisherman who travels to the Louisiana coast infuses a lot of money into restaurants, hotels, service stations, bait stands, and guide services to name a few. Do we have a good handle on the cost of this segment of the recreational fishery as to their economic impact when these out of staters hear that Louisiana has taken a step Our position is to maintain redfish as a gamefish. I ask you to consider the thousands and thousands of little fishermen. The weekend or evening fishermen who do not own a boat or have access to one. They could be devastate by a reversal of redfish gamefish status. The return of the redfish to a healthy stock has supported this very large segment of the coastal recreational fishery. On a recent trip to Myrtle Grove Canal in Plaquemines Parish I witnessed approximately 150 anglers fishing from the bank in a two block stretch. paid the marina operator \$10 for this privilege. I ask you to not take this resource away from the economically underprivileged coastal recreational To many this is their only means of escape from a very hectic and demanding world. We support the current status of gamefish for redfish. would argue that Louisiana's resources are for all Louisianians and this is a There are also good arguments for game status on deer, duck, good argument. rabbit, bass, sac-a-lait and perch. Fishing and hunting license fees benefit the entire state. If you recommend the removal of gamefish status for redfish, I suggest you should consider the recommendations for removal of gamefish status from other species. This, of course, would not be conducive to good management either biologically or economically. We are in favor of continued gamefish status for all of these species. The Enforcement Division is where the true conservationists in this state exists. Louisiana enforcement agents several years ago ranked 49th in the nation in pay scale. I would venture to guess they are still in the bottom 10. Despite this they have done an exemplary job with their limited resources. I have been told this Department is being faced with a budget cut of over \$1 million. How would this affect their ability to enforce a commercial take of redfish. Continued gamefish for redfish is essential. When redfish became gamefish in Louisiana, the commercial take of black drum sky What is the current status of the black drum stock? In the areas where I fish we used to catch 1 drum for every redfish. Now I seldom catch a drum an entire year. What is the current health of the black drum fishery? If it's unhealthy do we want to subject the redfish to the same fate? Redfish have rebounded not because they are more prolific than their black drum cousins, but because they have gamefish status. Please do not infer from my comments that I or the organization I represent are anti commercial. Quite the contrary. After World War II my father paid for his house with the hides from the coastal mink and muskrat. I lived in a trappers camp for the first 2 years after I was I used to own a commercial trawling license. I trawled while I was in high school to help fund my college education. I enjoy cooking Louisiana seafood for family and friends and purchase at least 200 pounds of shrimp every year. I also buy at least 50 pounds of crab meat and more than 10 gallons of oysters annually. These are all mainly commercial species and severe limits have been As the commercial sector has had dominate put on the recreational take. influence in these areas, the coastal recreational fishermen and the coastal recreational fishing industry should have the dominate say for the redfish. Gamefish status must remain. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Thank you.

Chairman Jones: Next speaker please.

I am Executive Director of the Louisiana Seafood Mr. Karl Turner: Promotion and Marketing Board. I would like to, on behalf of the Board, make several comments on why gamefish status should be changed at this time. Before doing that, I would like to bring to the attention of the first speaker, I believe, several newspaper reports written by a very well respected outdoor writers, Mr. Bob Marshall, Mr. Joe Macaluso, dates are here. These are people who are guides, cause he must not go into places these people go in. Says, I'm thinking of posting a few guards by the ramp with machine guns, Deffner says. That might be the only way we'll be safe from those redfish. There are so many reds in the marsh they're going to eat up all the minnows and then come after us. Another guide - great, said Joe Bourgeois of Lafitte. Never seen anything like it, said Johnny Glover of Cocodrie. Best redfishing in recent times. is anglers saying 1992 is their year. Mr. Macaluso's article - they're everywhere except in Bailey's area where rising Mississippi River has put redfish and bass fisherman on hold until the water levels out and the fish and new wintertime homes. It basically is a continuation of the other article, goes on to says and the reds seem to be taking to every habitat. They're on shell beds, on points where there are moving water, tucked into the edges of the marsh where small crabs and shrimp are working best and behind logs and stumps to get out of current flows. They're everywhere. So, apparently some sportsmen are Now, no one loves to go fishing more than I. I have 2 boys. catching reds. I am an avid sports fisherman. I go fishing as often as I can. All over the country I might add. But, the issue here today is not whether you like fishing or not like fishing. The issue is simply whether or not this Commission should include a recommendation to the legislature on whether or not to continue gamefish status or not and to provide detailed explanation for such recommendation. I think that is what the law says, and to provide detailed explanation on why or whether it should not should not continue. I would offer you the following reasons as explanations, in detail, as to why it should not continue. First, what do the people of the State of Louisiana want? Not what 2% of sports fishermen want. What do the people of the State of Louisiana want? In 1991 the Seafood Marketing Board conducted a survey of the people of Louisiana paid for by well respected pollster. We asked. Do you prefer a system that allows only sport fisherman to catch redfish or one that would allow commercials a certain quota so that you might buy it in restaurants and grocery stores? Eighty-two percent of the people in the survey said they would prefer the latter. Even in households that said they have a sports fisherman, they said they would like a system that allowed for commercial quota. This is what the people of the So this argument has been pitted between sports State of Louisiana want. fishermen and commercial fishermen and the group that has been left out is the consumers. Consumers. All the people of the state own the resource. Not some high-heeled sports fishermen who can afford to buy a \$35,000 Boston Whaler. It doesn't just belong to those people. It belongs to everyone. Some people do not have access to the resource. Some people do not have time to go fishing. Some do not have the luxury to go fishing. Some people are in wheelchairs and cannot go fishing. Some people are elderly and cannot go fishing and I will bring this point up, it's very important maybe overlooked, there are in the State of Louisiana of all the boat owners only 2% of them are black. A policy that prevents those people from having direct access to the resource is discriminatory. This group of people do not have boats, cannot go fishing generally in the \$35,000 Boston Whalers and therefore, the social justifications

for this reasons are as I stated. This is what the people want. Economic justifications. Commercial fishermen earn, or did earn, from 1984 through 1988, 35% of their income from redfish. They no longer earn that. Their lifestyle has changed. Their income has dropped. So there are economic reasons to allow that. And don't just use the dockside value for redfish and say its worth \$2 to sport fisherman, because when I went to Mr. Bees last week it cost me about \$14 to eat a trout dinner. And that's because it was not the most expensive one there. So, we must use that variable as well. Moving on, I don't think it's important to get into the question of who overfished. Some people have tried to use that argument here today and said don't let those bad guys with nets back on the water to catch redfish. The facts will prove that 73% of the redfish caught between 1980 and 1989 were by sports fishermen. Commercial fishermen caught 27%. Who overfished. But that's not the issue. We want to do what is right and in the best interest of the state from a social, economic and cultural standpoint and I have offered you reasons based on the law that should be considered. In summary, people have brought up other studies. Seven hundred million dollar study, I mean \$700 million industry. I will offer you the fact that the reason people go fishing is not to catch fish. That's not the primary reason. It's to relax. Studies, and I can show you these, indicate the primary reason that people go fishing is simply to have fun and to be outdoors. If you catch no fish you're going to go back anyway. So whether there's a 4 limit or a 5 limit or a 3 limit, you're going to go fishing. That's the reality. if you don't want to go fishing you can go golfing. There are other recreational activities to take part in. Finally, the resource is improving as stated in the biological data of the Department and we are not asking for any immediate, tomorrow change in the law. Simply saying as this stock improves let the consumers, not the commercials, have access to the resource and we can't get it if we don't have access to it by going to the stores and buy it. Thank you for this opportunity to make these comments. I hope that you all will listen and take heed to the comments that the public is making here today. Thank you.

Chairman Jones: Next, please. Next speaker. Do we have someone else?

Mr. Gene Hickman: How are you'll doing today? I'm a commercial fisherman and I fish every day in the marsh and I don't see where redfish are in danger at all. What I do see is the marshes and the land eroding away from underneath of us. We are sitting here fighting about a redfish. If you got fish in an aquarium, do you flush your toilet into it? Do you throw paint cleaner in it? No. That's what we are doing to our water. Everybody is fighting over a fish and poisoning all of the water. It don't make sense to me.

Chairman Jones: Thank you. Do we have any other speakers? The fastest walker. No, go ahead. To save time why don't you go sit over there since you want to speak. That way you can't back down.

Mr. Henry Martinez: I'm from St. Bernard Parish. I was under the impression that we might, and I'm a commercial fisherman. I was under the impression that this meeting might give us a little shot at catching a few redfish. Because they got plenty. The biologists that goes out and don't, you could go look at them, you don't have to try to catch them with a rod and reel. You've got to go in the right places, that's all. Lake Lery's full. We can't even fish the black drum in there because we catch too much redfish. It's too

much of a hassle. Everything suffers when you take one thing away. You take the redfish away from us and there was a year when there was no shrimp. We can't go fishing redfish, so everybody fishes crabs and it brought the ruination to the crabs because everybody go do one thing. We have to separate and do many different things. So everything can survive and they'll have plenty of it. These people, you'll cheated us for one thing. You'll told us there was going to be a 3-year closure and already it's going on 5 or 6 years. You know. not allowed, my family loves to eat redfish. I like redfish and potatoes. It don't have to be by Paul Prudhomme, the blackened redfish. You make a good couvillion. That's good enough. You know. We should be allowed what they're allowed, 5. I didn't come for you to open it completely. I come even is not a quota because I don't believe in quotas as a limit. Twenty-five redfish a day per person or either 50. No more than 50. That would be good enough. Right now we've go to just throw them away. Every time we make a harvest there's 40 or 50 redfish. Forty or 50 redfish. We turn them away loose, live. They are not harmed at all because I don't fish gill nets. I fish the old time way with a seine. They don't gill or nothing. They just go in a bag and we just turn them loose. And, I'm a little bit nervous. I guess you can tell. I sure hope you'll would help us out a little bit because we kind of suffering pretty bad. That's all I've got to say.

Chairman Jones: Thank you.

Mr. Calvin Dufrene: I'm 50 years. I'm from Galliano, Louisiana. I'm like him, a little nervous, but I'm going to get what I got on my chest off. speak to you from my heart. I've been a commercial fisherman from 1963 and 1974 full time. I can relate to you what the guy from Delacroix said. You know, women and children being cold and working hard because I come from there. From '74 to '85 I commercial fished part-time. For the last 18 years I've been a The area I come from I wish that I could say that the professional guide. Wildlife & Fisheries did a good job. I'm not sure. you know. I'm not going to question them, but this last winter is the worst winter I've ever had on redfish. This is the honest to God truth. I've caught one limit of redfish and I don't consider myself a bad guide. As a commercial fisherman I've kept my family alive for years catching fish. I've caught probably as many redfish as any guide with a 400 feet piece of trammel net. I still remember the day the people came from Florida. In the early 60's when they brought monofilament nets. Or the middle 60's. It was during the Vietnam War, I remember that. We had so many trout and redfish in the canals it wasn't funny. We would go out there and catch 3 or 4 hundred trout and it was a big joke to me. We don't see that kind of fish anymore. We still do good. With the redfish in the area, you know. Where I'm at, we're just not catching that many redfish this year. Now I can't say that there's not redfish in Delacroix, Hopedale, to the west. I don't know. I don't live there. I know where I live. I run that marsh for 40 square miles from Lafitte all the way to Grand Isle. All the way from Cow Island Pass and all the way across Lake Raccouri back to Lafitte to Little Lake. That's a big area. Right at 35 to 40 square miles. I'm tell you, that's not as many big schools of fish as people think in that area. Now, I'm not speaking for every other guide in every area. There may be. I don't know, but I'm going to tell you this much we need to quit bickering and bitching, excuse the word, amongst ourselves. The commercials and the sports, the guides, need to get together. We need to get this thing down. I've been coming to these meetings when the mayor of New

Orleans was sitting on this board with Leonard Chabert. Leonard Chabert, he's dead now. I remember when I was coming to the Natural Resource Committee and they've been bickering and fighting every since, and I was sitting on this side. I would be the last person on this earth to stop the commercial fishermen from making a living. Because I work just as hard as they did. I've got a brother that's a commercial fisherman. One of my best friends, my cousin, is a commercial fisherman. I would never do nothing to harm them. There are good commercial fishermen and there are bad commercial fishermen. Believe me, there are good sportsmen and there are greedy sportsmen. I've seen it all and I stand on that fine line right between both sides. I'm caught in both sides and it's hard for me to see people just keep fighting. How come in Texas they raise redfish. Why can't we do that? I'm willing to pay a thousand dollars a year as a professional guide. Just for a license. Give it to these people. Let's quit bickering amongst ourselves. We can raise redfish. We can put a man on the moon. We can drop a bomb down a smokestack in Iran. You mean to tell me we can't raise redfish and turn them loose in the wild? If we hurting that bad. I'm sure there's not a commercial fisherman in here that wouldn't pay a \$500 license just to make sure he could earn his living. How much is it worth to There's nobody that can't say they wouldn't pay you'll? You'll know that. If that's what you do for a living. We need to quit fighting amongst ourselves and get together. I'm not going to stand up here in front of you'll and make a fool out of myself and tell you'll that I'm on that side and that. I walk that fine line right in between both sides. But, I'm telling you'll as long as we don't have a little love for each other and get together and do what it takes. You couldn't pay me enough money to be on that Board right there.

Commissioner Mialjevich: They don't pay us, I assure you.

Mr. Calvin Dufrene: Well, if they would, they ain't got enough. Because you'll have got a hard decision to make and I don't envy you'll. Because it's a hard job what you've got to decide on today. But I would ask you to pray about it first and don't think of me and don't think of these other guys and them. Think of the fish first. Like the man said. Because without them, I'm going to be out of a job. They are going to be out of a job, you know. I don't know what the answer is, Jimmy. Bert? You know me, I'm an honest fella. don't. I don't have everything. I don't think anybody has the answer. well say this, if we keep coming to these meetings and fighting amongst each other, we ain't every going to get nothing done. We need to sit down and talk Both sides, everybody. Get suggestions, whatever it takes. to each other. Let's do it. I mean, this is the United States of America. It's supposed to get the greatest nation on this earth. Why can't we get together and talk like human beings and solve this problem. This is a simple problem to me. let's just get together. Whatever it takes. If you've got to raise the price of the fishing license. I don't care if it costs \$500, I'll pay it. Because that's what I have to do for a living. These other boys, they've got to do that too. The looser is going to be the fish if we don't do something. You know. And, I'm going to tell you another thing. It ain't the commercial fishermen that's destroying everything. That guy from Delacroix can tell you. We had a bad freeze in '83 and we had one in '84. I'm going to be a few more minutes. But the freeze of '89 was detrimental. I have never, I didn't even take pictures That's how bad it was. It was detrimental. It killed everything. Killed 95% of the fish. The fish in my area. I mean, and from there we had to

come from scratch. I mean, it just, from scratch. We just getting to where they have just a few fish, you know. And whether I catch them all or the commercials catch them all it ain't going to do no good if they don't have them for somebody. It's going to be history. So, I think we just need to get together and work this thing out. That's about all I have to say.

Chairman Jones: Thank you. Another speaker? I think you have already addressed...

Mr. Jim Bourge: Yes sir, I have already talked. I just wanted to make a couple of points real quick. If both recommendations that you'll have would have been read to the audience prior to the public comment, it would have sure simplified things a lot better to our understanding. Everybody says redfish, eliminate redfish status. It is not a recommendation to make, eliminate redfish status. It is a recommendation to investigate the possibility of opening a commercial redfish harvest based on: 1) no reduction in the recreational limit, and 2) no increased pressure on the fisheries. It's a big, big difference. Like I said, if these points would have been brought up at the beginning it would have made things a whole lot clearer.

Chairman Jones: Well, thank you very much, but I'm unaware of them to this point myself. We are taking public comment on the issue of gamefish status for redfish. So, you must know of something that I'm not look at. Are there are other speakers in the audience? Well, I guess it's down to business time. One more.

Mr. Jesse Fontenot: From St. Mary Parish, I represent the East St. Mary For many times, I have spoke represent the Parish Chamber of Commerce. commercial and the recreational. I chair a committee for the Chamber, wildlife and fisheries committees, seafood committees, for several years and also the St. Mary Industrial Group. I went to Washington with the commercial when they went on the TED's, I have attended every meeting they had on the TED and I spoke at one meeting. So, I have been around quite a bit for quite a few years and have always hoped someday relations would be better between commercial and recreation. In the past, we have had a lot of problem, in fact, I have supported commercial pretty much until Tee John Mialjevich brought the United States Intercoastal Waterway for two days and a little later on for another day, then I kind of lost interest in the organization. I told Tee John, whatever I talk about today, I don't want that to hurt our friendship. There have been a lot of talk about the redfish affecting 30,000 commercial fishermen. In 1990, there was 208,292 saltwater licenses sold. There was 2,515 gill net licenses sold plus 1,453 outof-state licenses. Making a survey, the Chamber of Commerce in Morgan City, working with the Wildlife and Fisheries and LSU came up with a figure where half was saltwater and half of the gill net was freshwater. So using that figure, using that figure, will give you 1,984 saltwater gill nets sold between both of them, between the out-of-state and in the state, will give you a total of affecting the Louisiana commercial fishermen of 1,267. The last year Louisiana commercial fish redfish, they harvested 1,600,000 in 176 days. average of 4.58 per person per day which would be at \$4.58. They talk about the gill net do not damage fish, I disagree with them. I have some pictures here I would like to bring up. This gill net was dated, what was the date on that Bert, '91? (Commissioner Jenkins answered 1/3/91.) That particular net where

you see five fish floating on top of the water had 44 gill net. The people that were fishing, came and run it a little while later. They said they were fishing for speckled trout and this reef they were fishing, I have been fishing speckled trout there, I have been redfishing there for many years, I had never caught a speckled trout. He said they been catching a lot of speckled trout there before. So, I am sure that is what he was fishing for, for speckled trout. But I assure you, and this is not the only picture I have seen by, many times in the area. I have heard about the redfish eating all the shrimp and the crab, I sure would like for the Wildlife and Fisheries to make people check the crab trap in that area, that is in the Atchafalaya Bay, Four Leaf Bay and Cote Blanche Bay. crab is very, very small right now and they are catching an awful lot of them. So, it ain't just the crab, the redfish eating the crab. The fishermen are eating a bunch of them also. One guy talked here, gave a report a while ago of seafood industry was \$144,000,000. It would be hard for me to believe that just a few, 4 or 5 million dollars worth of fish, would help them very much if they already catching that many fish. Redfish is about 1/3 of 1% of the seafood Tee John, if you disagree with that check with the Wildlife and Fisheries and I know it probably could give a report on that. Louisiana had 899,000 people fishing in 1992, so it's very urgent for us to continue protecting the redfish. I think in the future, I hope someday that ya'll do come up, I agree very much with what some of the people talk about, why can't we have both of them, commercial and recreation. I'd support that very strong in the future but before I would support it, I'd want to see a plan where it is going to work. I don't want to see a plan where you see nets like that full of dead redfish. Whenever that plan is proven to me, I would very much support fishing for commercial and recreational. It had never been proven yet though. Parish is a parish with 138 policemen in the parish and the cities. We have 3 agents to represent the whole parish, so we do have a very big problem. in the future we can have better enforcement and better management than we have had in the past. Thank you.

Chairman Jones: Are there some other speakers?

Mr. Mike Fernet: Commissioners and to everybody else that's in this room, I'm Mike Fernet. I own a charter boat business operation in Venice and I think the question here today is in reference to the redfish and how the species are coming back or falling apart as to what different people say in this room. I think that a lot of people are missing the point as far as what really needs to be attended to, not only into the Commission, but in our minds and our thoughts. It's not the sport fishermen against the commercial fishermen. It should not be the commercial fishermen against the sports fishermen. It should be for the species itself. If the species is not around 10 years from now, it is not to the benefit of us and the charter boat industry, to the commercial industry, or to the consumer of seafood business whether they do not fish or fish in the State I feel that in certain parts of the state it may be true that redfish are making a comeback from what they were 5 years ago. There's also areas of the state that the redfish are not showing a tremendous comeback. What needs to happen before the gamefish status of redfish is taken off or kept on or whatever, we have to decide, or the Commission has to decide from information that is gathered either by biologists or professional people in the field, if the fingerlings or the small redfish stock, the juvenile stock in the marsh area is at a capability load right now that can be harvested. Is there enough brood stock in the coastal areas, in the gulf areas of Louisiana to replenish the stock that will be taken from the marsh. If we do not know those answers I don't think that this Board or anybody else can make a decision at this time to take the gamefish status off of redfish. And until that time, I think that the Board should defer a decision and leave gamefish status on as it is right now until it can be proven if at certain stages of the redfish whether we have x amount of redfish in the marsh that are 8 inches, 12 inches, 14 inches, 16 inches, 26 inches, enough to where these redfish can reproduce. The only way that we can know that is to find out exactly what stocks lay out in the coastal waters of Louisiana to replenish what stocks are in the marsh areas. I don't think there's any commercial fishermen or any sports fishermen that are sitting in this room that can admit to themselves that they would go out and harvest any species of fish and if you feel that in one year from now or five years from now that you will not be in business because of that certain species, then I think you are making a bad decision not only for yourself, for your family, for the whole State of Louisiana. At this time, until there is further information gathered in reference to the redfish, I personally would like to see the gamefish status kept on the redfish. Thank you.

Mr. Gary Clark: I'm with the Louisiana Bass Fishing and my only problem I have to say is if we take the redfish and make it no longer a sports fish, is bass, bream, sac-a-lait, are they next? That's only thing I want the Commission to know. You shake your head and say no, but in other states they are selling bass across the board now. You know, they are selling other game fish across the board. So, I'm sure that commercial fishermen and recreational fishermen can work together if we do something. If we keep meeting like this, I'm sure you guys will agree with me that solutions can be found because the only way we know each others minds and each others thoughts are through these meetings. I don't want to see me have to come up here later and fight against freshwater fish being taken off the sports status. Thank you.

Chairman Jones: Are there other speakers? Alright. For Tee John's benefit we're going to take a minute and a half recess here. You got that Tee John. It's official we have a recess and we'll be back in just about 2 or 3 minutes.

Chairman Jones: We're looking for Captain Pete.

Chairman Jones: Well, Tee John is back and I want to reconvene this meeting of February 25, 1993. The special meeting for the Wildlife & Fisheries Commission. We are right at the tail end of the public comment. I had one individual that came up and said that he would like to speak and didn't have an opportunity to speak. I'm not sure I see him now. There you are. Alright, please address the mike.

Mr. Al Convenudo: I'm the president and founder of Ocean Adventures of Louisiana. My company is starting a redfish farm down in Central America. The reason why we are doing a redfish farm in Central America is two-fold. One is that we've digested all the research done by LSU, Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries, Texas A&M University, University of Florida, University of South Carolina and after digesting all this information that we've received over a long period of time we've concluded that redfish farming is not feasible in the State of

Louisiana. For several reasons. One is the climate, two is the threat of a major freeze that kills all the fish, four is the coastal pollution, five is the bird predation on the fish, etc., etc. and I can go on for probably ten more. After doing all this research on aquaculture, we then started doing research on marketing fish and marketing farm raised fish. We've been doing this now for three years. We've concluded that the market, primarily the institutional market like the restaurants and the super markets, want a standard product of a standard size on an ongoing supply basis. We've also concluded that the real market out there really wants a farm raised product because they know it's raised in a pristine environment without all the potential coastal pollution and all the other pathogens that are found in fish caught off the coastal waters of the United States and other countries. So, having digested all this and having all this knowledge we are about maybe 6 months away from getting our first fish in the water. We know we can grow, the way our project is designed, up to 9 million pounds of redfish a year. We can grow redfish, get them to market and I'm saying get them to market. Put them in that wholesaler's hands at our cost is less than a dollar a pound and I'm talking about fillets that are vacuum packed and are frozen. You cannot compete with this type of technology in the wild fisheries because of the fact that you'll have to sell that fish for 30 cents a pound and then someone's going to have to fillet it and skin it and at that point up come up with about a 30% yield from a fish. That wholesaler is going to buy it from you for 45-50 cents a pound and the commercial fishermen are not going to be able to make a living catching fish, especially if there's a quota on them, at 45 and 50 cents a pound. If the State of Louisiana and the Wildlife & Fisheries and the legislature does approve commercial fishing, and I'm all for commercial My grandfather was a commercial fisherman. He brought some of the first deep sea trawlers in the State of Louisiana from Florida back in the 30's. I'm a firm believer that if the State of Louisiana does approve commercial fishing for redfish and all other species they should put a quota on the amount of fish that are caught. They should put a quota on the number of licenses issued and put a limit at it and say we are only going to issue a thousand commercial licenses for fishing of finfish. Hold to it. Stick with it, because other states have done this for 20 or 30 years. You cannot get a license in the State of Oregon and Washington to go out fishing other than buying it from an existing fisherman who owns a license. Now secondly, if we do have a quota of commercial catch of redfish in the State of Louisiana, irregardless of what the size is, you have serious market constraints. Number one it's illegal to sell them in Texas. The Texas law says only farm raised redfish can be sold in the State of Texas. It's illegal to sell them in Florida. Now that law in Florida was tested all the way up to the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court ruled in the favor of the State of Florida. They are legal to sell in Louisiana, will be legal to sell in Louisiana is the legislature approves the commercial status of it. However, the real market out there in the major cities, New York, Boston, Chicago, California. We talked to big restaurants. We talked to suppliers of restaurants and what they want is a standard size product that they can rely on week after week, after week, after week, and they are willing to pay a premium price for that. But, they are not going to pay a decent price for a 9 pound bull red that they are going to have big chunks of fillets and three people order redfish at the same table and one comes out with a big chunk here and looks at a different size over here, that's not the market for it. So, if they do pass a commercial quota for redfish and I'm in favor of it. I think that everyone that's a commercial fisherman should be able to make a living. They should put

a size limitation on the size of the fish that can be caught. They should put a poundage and/or just a number of fish. If they say 3 pounds is the maximum size or 2-3 pounds is the only ones that you can take and have a 100,000 pound quota or 50,000 pound quota that's fine. But, not every fisherman who has a seine net and a trammel net is going to be able to go out there and catch 50-60,000 pounds a year. In a short period of time you fish them out like they did back in the mid 80's and then the feds will come in and close it down again and everybody's right back in the same boat like they are now. I talked to crab fishermen weekly because there are a lot of crabs down in Central America. Basically they are crying the blues because there's no crabs in the State of Louisiana. The biologists have been telling them for a couple of years now that the population is declining. To give you a little story of not only State of Louisiana and United States, when I fist started going down to Central America basically I got involved with the fishing industries down there and I went to a symposium one day and all the fishermen were there and there was probably the same population we have in here but everybody was a commercial fisherman. They were giving the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries a fit because they were trying to put a quota on the number of lobsters taken. Historically, if you look at all the records of the lobster landings in the country of Velice, it has been declining about 15% a year. The reason for it is they didn't have a quota on their catch. Now they're all crying because there's not lobsters out there to They want them to reduce the size of the tails. Secondly, they have historically been line fishermen catching grouper out in the open ocean and then processing them their in their plants and also in Nicaragua and Honduras and Guatemala and then the biologists came, the marine biologists came as "recreational divers" and they discovered that the grouper spawn the first full moon of the second month of the year and that could generally be the end of January. All of a sudden everyone learned that the grouper spawn on the first full moon of the second month of the year and all the commercial fisherman started and they even told them where they were. 0.k. So, then all the commercial fishermen go out there and congregate on these spawning grounds and they are catching 20, 30, 40,000 pounds of mature groupers, spawning grouper a day and bringing them back in for processing and they couldn't process them fast enough in their plants. Now they are crying the blues because the grouper population is falling down and they are not catching any grouper. Well, hell, they went out there and they fished all their brood stock out. So, the point that I'm trying to make is that if the Commission and the legislature does approve and agree to a small quota on redfish we're going to have to live with that. But, they are going to have to make a size limitation on the catch so that they can have a market for their fish rather than trying to send a 40 pound bull red to New York which they are not going to buy. Thank you very, very much Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Jones: Thank you. Alright.

Mr. Ted Loupe: Mr. Chairman, I know I spoke already but I feel it's my duty to clarify something this gentlemen just said. To show you propaganda. I'm Chairman of the Crab Task Force of the State of Louisiana, sir. Our crab population is not on the decline. Landings in 1989, 33.5 million pounds. Landings in 1990, 39.1 million pounds. Landings in 1991, 51.2 million pounds. They've increased for the last 3 years sir. But we thank you for your propaganda.

Chairman Jones: I think everyone here has had an opportunity to speak if they would like to. There was something in my packet here. Comments on the agenda item for special commission meeting. Can somebody give me the history on that so I can get it into the minutes. We have a packet here of comments that we received by telephone as of up till today. One o'clock this afternoon. Basically, there were 65 phone calls. Is that correct? Obviously the people that are in favor for gamefish use the phone better because it's a 65 to nothing poll on that unless I read it differently. So, be that in the record that we're entering the comments on the agenda item for special commission meeting the packet that was in everybody's concerning telephone conversations.

Commissioner Gisclair: Mr. Chairman, are we going to go into discussion? The Commission members? I mean, are we going to discuss this?

Chairman Jones: You bet we are.

Commissioner Gisclair: O.K. I'd like to pass out a resolution first for us to look at and I'd like to read it and the purpose being that in discussion we also discuss the resolution if you'll have any questions. Mr. Puckett, would you read the resolution?

Chairman Jones: O.K. Mr. Gisclair, I would request if this is going to be a motion?

Commissioner Gisclair: No it won't. It's for discussion. I mean, I'm talking about now, it's for discussion.

Chairman Jones: Well, if this is going to be a motion I would like for you to present it. Because I think it's up to the Commission now. So, as the status, that being the recommendation...

Commissioner Gisclair: Well, I'm going to present this. Only read it. I'm not going to put it as a recommendation. We are going to discuss public comment. Correct? We said that we...

Chairman Jones: We are going to discuss among the Commission and you are welcome to deliberate on anything that you would like to whether it be from your own interpretation of the information you've received from the public comments or whether it be from your own information.

Commissioner Gisclair: At the same time, before we do this, if I make this part of the record and give to the Commission that they can read this and if they have any questions they can also ask questions on the resolution. I think I'm in order.

Chairman Jones: Oh, yeah. Are you saying you want to reopen it for public comment?

Commissioner Gisclair: I just said I want to add this to the public comment before we end the public comments. So in the discussion this can be in the discussion.

Chairman Jones: All right. That's fine.

Commissioner Gisclair: Do you mind if Mr. Puckett reads it into the mike?

Chairman Jones: I don't mind.

Commissioner Gisclair: If I can give him a copy he can go ahead and read it. I don't think he has a copy.

Mr. Donald Puckett: I'm gonna just read this in form, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Jones: It's not my request.

Mr. Donald Puckett: This is a resolution of the Commission, a proposed resolution of the Commission, dated, well it would be dated today.

- WHEREAS, this Commission, pursuant to R.S. 56:6(27) adopted the Red Drum Report prepared by Department staff dated February 4, 1993, and
- WHEREAS, that Report, while discussing gamefish status did not contain within it a recommendation as to the retention or removal of gamefish status for red drum, and
- WHEREAS, this Commission hereby includes such a recommendation to the Legislature to accompany and supplement the technical report prepared by the Department, and
- WHEREAS, biological data from recent years shows that current fishing pressure has and will continue to improve the red drum populations now and into the future, and
- WHEREAS, the designation of "gamefish" as it relates to the current status of red drum is of little biological utility, but rather it is a political approach to allocation, and
- WHEREAS, 81% of Louisiana voters surveyed in a 1991 statewide poll indicated a preference for a redfish management policy based on a commercial harvest that would enable them to buy Louisiana redfish in restaurants and grocery stores.
- THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby recommends to the Legislature that gamefish status for red drum be removed in accordance with the following conditions:
  - (a) that the Secretary and his staff be directed by the Legislature to develop a plan on or before January 1, 1994 to implement a commercial harvest of red drum;
  - (b) that the plan provide for no reduction in the current recreational bag limit and for the equitable allocation of the

available harvest between the commercial and recreational fisheries based upon the historical distribution of the catch; and

(c) that this plan incorporate recommendations for strict controls and regulations which may include, but not be limited to, the establishment of a permit system, a limited entry system and/or a tagging system.

and that concludes the text of the proposed resolution.

Chairman Jones: Thank you sir. Mr. Gisclair you have the floor.

Commissioner Gisclair: We can go ahead and discuss it now. I'm just saying I just want it entered into the minutes and now we will discuss comments and plus if anybody has an questions concerning the resolution.

Commissioner Gisclair: I have one question. On these 65 or so answers you have, call ins, there's 24 of them say don't reduce the creel limit from 5 to 2. I don't know where that came from. I have no idea who told them we were considering reducing the creel limit from 5 to 2. That is one reason why I want to make part of the minutes this resolution that it says no reduction. Could you, you have any idea where the people got this perception that we were going to reduce the creel limit. Cause 24 of those out of the 65 answered only to I am satisfied, do not reduce the creel limit and that was their answer. They didn't address the gamefish. It was just don't reduce the creel limit.

Chairman Jones: I'm sorry. I just got this information like you did.

Commissioner Gisclair: But it was not the intention of anybody on this Commission that I know of today to reduce any creel limit on recreational fishermen.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Do we record the people that call this phone number or something. Maybe we could get back to a few of them and see maybe they were mislead into calling for a different reason. We don't record their phone number? Are we going to be able to ask some questions of the people that made comments?

Chairman Jones: Yes. We're at Commission discussion. Tee John you have the floor.

Commissioner Mialjevich: All right. Let me see. There was one gentlemen that talked and I didn't get his name that was talking about what is fair. I believe it was the same person that was talking about barbless hooks and catchand-release and that. The think I'm looking at here is what is fair. You know. What is fair. What is fair has so many different definitions. Fair might be I have all the marbles and you don't have any and fair I give you a third of the marbles and fair I give them all to you because I'm not selfish at all. I kind of question that statement what is fair and another thing was when a couple of people, two as a matter of fact, talked about a 9 year plan. I don't see any 9 year plan in anything here. Does anybody can shed a light on what a 9 year

plan is? Has somebody in the audience got some wrong information again? Can the person that mentioned this step up and explain what he means by a 9 year plan? However said it? Well, I guess we just go into some discussion then. I feel from what I heard from the testimony and I believe that they do have some sincere people out there that do want something to work between the commercial and recreational people. I don't want to end the recreational fishery. I just want to see if there is any extra fish that the commercial people get it as it was promised to them when the made game, you know, in the legislature. gamefish status as in the resolution does little to control the total harvest of red drum. Cause I haven't seen them shut down red drum fishery because they went over a quota, yet. I've read material that says that some people, not all recreational people, do actually overfish and catch more than their limit. Well, hey, that's enforcement. Not much we can do about that. But on the other hand. if we're going to loose money in the Department and we don't have enough enforcement to control the commercial harvest then we don't have enough money to enforce properly the recreational harvest. So, does that mean that we have to throw up a red flag and shut down the recreational harvest cause we don't have money to enforce it. I think that would be ridiculous to do that. you do what you can. Gamefish status does little to protect the biological integrity of red drum stocks since it does not control the amount of effort expended. You might have 100 recreational fishermen go out today, the weather gets good tomorrow, you've got a thousand. Thus it fluctuates. You might get people move into town and you might have double the number of recreational fishermen in the next three years. What did you do to protect the resource? Gamefish didn't do it. It's like it said in the report if a net takes the fish, if a shrimp trawl takes the fish, if a crab trap takes the fish, if an oyster dredge takes the fish, or if a hook and line catches the fish, it's still out of the fishery. It don't grow, it don't reproduce. So, gamefish doesn't prevent any of that. Gamefish is as it's stated a social and I don't want to say or, Nothing to do with biology or but and political approach to allocation. conservation. It's simply and I no nobody else wants to say it but I will. It's simply an expression of greed. We're not saving anything except for one special group of people that think they are better than the rest of the human beings in the State of Louisiana and I don't think anybody is any better than I am. are all created equal here and we should all have an equal share of the resource. I understand the people said we are not equal because commercial fishermen cannot But there's both sides of that issue and what was in this recommendation we have here is they are going to have exact controls that they've got to have a tag for every fish they bring in the commercial people was, then all you're going to be catching is outlaws and there's outlaws on both sides. So, you will have a controlled fishery that can't be manageable by the enforcement that we do have. Anglers could increase on the number of trips targeting redfish and there goes your gamefish in protecting it. That doesn't So what does it stop the anglers from increasing from 5 trips a year to 25. protect? How does it protect the number of fish that are taken? People already stated what the damage from Hurricane Andrew. Freshwater people are going to have to turn to saltwater fishing. Gamefish status is not going to prevent that. So we might come up with overfishing from the recreational side Something we might have to look into. Additional, well I already said about additional recreational anglers can convert from one fish to redfish. What about the number of people moving into our state. They like to fish, I like to fish. I take my little 8 year old girl fishing, you know. So, what is fair?

One group of people can get a fish and the other can't. One group of people can eat a fish, another group can't. That isn't fair in my book. But I need to ask the biologists a question about the SSBR. I understand doing, and is Mr. Blanchet in the room? I understand and remember I'm from the shrimping community and I hear things about what went on in Baton Rouge about the time that this was changed into a gamefish status. There was some numbers thrown around about there wasn't enough escapement out into the group of fish offshore. The mamas and the papas to make it simple. I understand that this program and maybe that's where this 9 year program thing come out maybe they thought it would take 9 years to accomplish more spawning stock. They have a better population offshore than inshore. What, I see in our report here on figure 8 that there is a red drum spawning stock biomass and recruitment in scenario 1 and scenario 2. Can you tell me what the escapement was supposed to be? What is good escapement? I mean, what is tagged as this is what should be happening if we are going to have a healthy fishery. What that number should be?

Mr. Harry Blanchet: The Gulf Council when it set it's red drum regulations set a goal of 30% escapement in order to attain a 20% spawning stock biomass per ratio in the adult population.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Well, explain to me what is the difference in escapement and the spawning stock biomass.

Mr. Harry Blanchet: Well, escapement is essentially as it was defined, it was escapement from the inshore fishery. Once the fish moves offshore there is still some small harvest on that fish and so that the Council estimated that it would need the difference between the escapement and the SSBR in order to account for that harvest offshore. Just because it got offshore doesn't mean it automatically it's there for spawning. There is still some harvest and there is also still some mortality. Natural morality between the time it leaves to go offshore and the time it begins to spawn.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Well, what I'm looking at in 1990 in scenario 1 and scenario 2 it was something like about 20% and in the other scenario it was something like about 30% in 1991. Right now in 1992 it's something like about 30% in scenario 1 and something like about 38% in scenario number 2. This is over the 30% right now in 1992 and it looks like it's predicted to go over 40% in 1993. Is that what you'll use to indicate that there is an increase in redfish out there in the biomass?

Mr. Harry Blanchet: Well, I don't have the numbers right in front of me. But...

Commissioner Mialjevich: Here's a copy. Give me back after. I'm trying to find out we had testimony today

Chairman Jones: Come ahead John if you need to.

Mr. John Roussel: I had come to help Harry answer questions but I missed the question because somebody had my ear.

Commissioner Mialjevich: I mean we are hearing testimony today one guy can't find fish. Another guy says they got lakes full out there. One guy can't catch fish one time he's got to buy them. Another guy can't get his hook to go to the bottom to catch something else. So, I'm just trying to see. I mean, you're the biologist.

Mr. John Roussel: What is the question, simply? Maybe I can answer it simply.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Simply, there was a number of 20% spawning escapement and I wanted the difference between spawning escapement and the spawning stock biomass.

Mr. John Roussel: O.k. I heard Harry answer that and he answered it exactly the way I would answer it. The management objective that was set up for red drum was a minimum spawning stock biomass of 20%. Escapement is that percent that escaped to the spawning biomass because there is some harvest of fish that are of spawning age. For example, in Louisiana we allow the harvest of 1 fish over 27 inches. They built in that 10% slack between escapement and spawning stock biomass. So, we are managing for escapement from the inshore fishery of 30% which should equate to a 20% spawning stock biomass in terms of SSBR.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Am I correct in reading these two graphs on figure 8 that 1992 we were at 30 or 30 1/2% and in 1992 on the second scenario we're at 38%. Is that close enough in interpretation?

Mr. John Roussel: I'll read, in 1992 under scenario 1 we were approximately at a SSBR of 32% and scenario 2 in 1992 we were approximately at an SSBR of 38% and I'm just reading roughly off the graph.

Commissioner Mialjevich: All right. That's larger than the 30%, right. So, that's why you'll are making a prediction that the redfish spawning stock and biomass is on an increase.

Mr. John Roussel: Correct. We're certain that the trends towards increasing spawning stock biomass is actually taking place. If you recall, when we spoke last month, the key question that is unanswered is scenario 1 or 2 an actual true representation of the magnitude of the spawning stock biomass offshore or is there some other scenario that we don't have included that actually is the true picture. And we said the key answer to that question would come from an offshore tagging study if we would go back and duplicate what was done in 1986 by the National Marine Fisheries Service. That again is the kind of the final piece to the puzzle to tell us whether scenario 1 is right, scenario 2 is right, or neither one of the these two are right.

Commissioner Mialjevich: O.k. But, going a little further. In 1993 what the numbers are going to read? Supposed to be projected.

Mr. John Roussel: In 1993 under scenario 1, SSBR would be approximately 40% under 38 to 39% under current levels of fishing. And under scenario 2 in 1993 you would be about 41-42%. 41%

Commissioner Mialjevich: 0.k. and do the same for 1994 and what we are asking for a quota for commercial at that time in '94.

Mr. John Roussel: '94 under scenario 1, you would be approximately 42% and scenario 2, you would be approximately 45-46%.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Double the 20% and almost close to double the 30% that we seen as the magic numbers that say we have a healthy recovering stock. Am I right?

Mr. John Roussel: Those percentages that are projected by these two models, that are produced by these two scenarios are well in excess of the 20% SSBR management criteria. But again, the reason why our recommendation was to hold current levels of fishing was because we wanted to try to determine with absolute certainty which one of these two was right or whether there was a third alternative and that was the basis for our recommendation that's contained in the report. But, the answer to your question is yes. Those two scenarios show SSBR well above the criteria that was established.

Commissioner Mialjevich: So, whatever is being done is working to a point to where there is excess fish and we are either going to have go and give a larger creel limit or there is some fish that can be allocated to commercial as soon as 1994. Not 1992 and 1993.

Mr. John Roussel: Unless some things take place which you mentioned earlier and that is recreational effort increases, number of participants in the current fishery increase, the number of trips increase, that type of stuff can take place to take those which you called excess fish. O.k. So, I'm not comfortable saying that there's automatically excess fish. I hope I didn't confuse you there, but I wanted to bring that point out.

Commissioner Mialjevich: So, if I understand it right then, if we have no control over recreational harvest which gamefish status is not, then any gains we make can be wiped out simply by overfishing on the recreational part.

Mr. John Roussel: They, they could, increasing effort could take place which would essentially result in no "excess" fish if that's the term we want to use.

Commissioner Mialjevich: So what we have here is a perpetual policy to keep it for one specific user group. That perpetuates itself. I don't know. So. Well, you gave me a good explanation now I understand that as long as we have gamefish status there is no hope of there ever being any fish allowed to anybody else and I don't think that's fair. That's as simple as can be. So, I'm not in favor of putting redfish in an endangered species list which I don't think it can be put, but I just think if we are going to be up here and use words like fair and equitable that what's fair is right here. The redfish is on an increase. We are looking at possibly double by the year 1994 of the escapement and the spawning stock biomass but 1%, no I'm sorry 2% of the Louisiana citizens say no it should be just for us. I don't think that's right.

Chairman Jones: Yes, is there other comments? Yes sir, Mr. Cormier.

Commissioner Cormier: On this resolution that has been proposed. Am I reading it right Mr. Gisclair. It says that it's more of a political approach to allocation and also there has been comments in the audience that I feel need to be addressed. A lot of people are talking about possibilities. Everything is possible. I may walk out this door and die. That is possible but I do not think, me as a Commissioner, should make decision based upon if I walk out and fall on this floor. I think I should make the decision based upon facts. Recreational fishermen need to have their point heard and when we talk about social, political, I was not elected by the people of this state. appointed. I think the people of this state when you talk about a social issue should make that determination and being we, as a Commission, cannot afford or cannot put an agenda a referendum for the people to vote on, I think the next best people should be the legislator. That is their responsibility to regulate that portion of things. Those social issues. One gentlemen made a statement about if everybody will abide by the law, total compliance. If there was total compliance, I am a law enforcement officer I would not have a job. If there was total compliance. We cannot have what we all want in life. There was also a gentlemen who made a point about black people don't own bass boats. I agree with that 100%. We cannot afford one, economically we can't. We also sometime cannot afford to go pay \$4.50 a pound for a redfish either. I know my neighbors can't. But does that mean I'm going to keep the recreational fishermen out. No it's That should not be the case and I don't think it should be the case or brought up that black people can't afford a bass boat either. I've got some points that I wrote down. Just bear with me a minute cause I want everyone to know that I did listen and I paid great credence to what you had to say. I think the legislator should be the one to come out and order this Department, this agency to make a study, a final study, as to what can be feasible that will answer all these questions for us. I'm new. I don't really know what type of study we need but I think we need a study that will give us all the answers to whether commercial can get a harvest and how we are going to take it. Let the experts do that. Right now I don't think we have enough of that. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Jones: Thank you Mr. Cormier. Are there other comments? Well, do I hear a motion concerning our recommendation to the legislature as per the status of red drum whether it be gamefish or not?

Commissioner Gisclair: Mr. Chairman, I put before you a motion that the resolution that we read earlier on the Commission consider it to vote on it.

Commissioner Mialjevich: I'll second it.

Chairman Jones: There has been a motion, Mr. Gisclair, that being the resolution on which Mr. Puckett read. It has been seconded by Tee John.

Commissioner Jenkins: Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Jones: Yes sir, Mr. Jenkins?

Commissioner Jenkins: I would like to make a substitute motion and that's to adopt the following resolution:

- WHEREAS, this Commission pursuant to R.S. 56:6(27), adopted the Red Drum Report prepared by the Department staff dated February 4, 1993, and
- WHEREAS, that report, while discussing gamefish status did not contain within it a recommendation as to the retention or removal of gamefish status of red drum, and
- WHEREAS, this Commission hereby includes such a recommendation to the Legislature to accompany and supplement the technical report prepared by the Department, and
- WHEREAS, five years ago the Legislature declared red drum a gamefish subject to it's three year sunset provision, and
- WHEREAS, Acts 1991, No. 157 of the Louisiana Legislature permanently established red drum as a gamefish, and
- WHEREAS, the biological staff of the Department of Wildlife & Fisheries have recommended no increase in current fishing mortality rate on red drum, and
- WHEREAS, therefore, the only way any allowable commercial take of red drum could occur without an increase in mortality rates would be to reduce the recreational catch limits, and
- WHEREAS, it is the opinion of the Commission that such a reallocation of red drum resources should not be in the best interest of the state from a social or economic standpoint.
- THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Commission hereby respectably recommends to the Legislature the present gamefish status of red drum be retained.
- THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission directs the Secretary to have the appropriate staff members make additional studies including catch-and-release, marine recreational surveys which will enhance the Department's ability to evaluate this fishery.

That's my motion.

Chairman Jones: There is a motion. There has been a substitute motion of Mr. Jenkins.

Commissioner Schneider: I'll second the substitute motion, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Jones: Mr. Schneider seconds the substitute motion of Mr. Jenkins. Is there comment?

Mr. Don Puckett: Can I declare a technical point? Both of the resolutions that are presently before the Commission make reference to the February 4th

report. Obviously the February 18th report has been adopted. Whichever motion should pass should contain a reference to that.

Commissioner Jenkins: All right. Mr. Chairman, I'll change mine to read the 18th.

Commissioner Gisclair: Does Mr. Jenkins have a copy of the resolution to give to the other Commissioners?

Commissioner Jenkins: Yeah.

Chairman Jones: Is the proper date the 18th, or does, it's today's date, the 25th?

Commissioner Jenkins: The report's dated the 18th.

Chairman Jones: The report's dated the 18th but has been properly amended that being today, February 25th.

Commissioner Jenkins: But it says prepared by the Department's staff, dated, and the date the report is dated is the 18th. So that's correct.

Chairman Jones: Yes. Is there discussion concerning this? Yes sir, Mr. Cormier?

Commissioner Cormier: Now, that. I have a question to Mr. Jenkins. That catch-and-release and marine recreational survey that report will, in fact, answer these questions for us once and for all. I mean, how are we going to go

Commissioner Jenkins: Mr. Cormier, what I did was I called the people in the Marine Fisheries Division and I asked them. In a sense this is a general statement but it includes specific studies and I asked them what additional information could we get to help them evaluate the fishery and these are the two items which they told me that would help a lot. In addition to this, as you recall, in the redfish report which we adopted there is a recommendation from the Department in there that we petition the National Marine Fisheries to do the offshore stock survey and I presume since we've accepted that report that we will make that request. So, between that report and this additional information this is what I've been told by the Department that would help us evaluate the situation. Mr. Roussel can speak to that if you want to.

Mr. John Roussel: These particular studies will help us evaluate this fish from a biological perspective but I don't want anybody to be mislead into thinking this will answer all the social, political and other issues. But from a biological perspective, the critical study is the offshore tagging study but some additional work on the inshore population's such as the creel survey will also help.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Question? On the whereas therefore the only way that an allowable commercial take or red drum could occur without an increase in current mortality rates would be to reduce the recreational catch limits. From what I was asking the biologists a while ago, I don't get that from this

report. It shows me that, I mean, that we're going to have almost double the escapement, double the spawning stock biomass so it isn't necessarily true that the only way to have an allowable commercial take of red drum is to take it away from the recreational fisherman. So, why should a statement like this be made in this resolution? It's right here in black and white. Now if someone here's a better biologist than the ones with Wildlife & Fisheries? I mean, we take their word on bass with the freshwater. We take their word on ducks and hunting and shrimp and fish and crab and oyster but it seems that their biology isn't good enough for this resolution. This is contrary to what I'm reading here in figure 8, sir.

Commissioner Jenkins: You want me to try to explain that to you?

Commissioner Mialjevich: Surely. It needs explaining.

Commissioner Jenkins: Do you agree that the report we adopted that it is a recommendation of the biologists that we take no more fish from the fishery than we are taking?

Commissioner Mialjevich: At this point.

Commissioner Jenkins: Well, that's where we are. We're here today. Not tomorrow, next year.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Yeah, but you're closing the door for tomorrow. See this report says there will be fish in the future. That's what I'm talking about.

Commissioner Jenkins: We're going to do this next year, Tee John.

Chairman Jones: Every year we have to make...

Commissioner Jenkins: This comes up every 12 months and right now it says in black and white their recommendation. We adopted their recommendation. No more fish out of the fishery. So, if you take more fish out of the fishery and you conclude that the biologists are correct that you can't take anymore how are you going to take them?

Commissioner Mialjevich: Well, let me get that biologist up here one more time.

Commissioner Jenkins: All right, you take it from the user group that's using it today and you give it to another group.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Get both of them up here. You'll want to get to the bottom of things. I'll tell you'll we're going to have to put something in this resolution about reconvening that Finfish Task Force and let's get us on talking terms. That would be one addition I would have if you'll would accept it out. What makes you'll so sure that we can't take one additional fish out of this spawning stock biomass at this point and time?

Mr. John Roussel: Let me try to answer that as directly as I can but also try to be as accurate as I can. The red drum report presents 2 scenarios that the Department staff feels best represent, using the available data, the current and future condition of red drum. There is, of course, some uncertainty about whether either one of those is totally accurate. There is a possibility the neither one of those are right. Because of that uncertainty, and the fact that under both scenarios we're in a period of recovery, we at this time recommend not that no additional fish be harvested. There is a difference between using NOAA's words and using the words that there be no increase in current fishing pressure and what that means in my terms is that fishing mortality rate. If you have a large year class or bumper year class of fish that comes into the fishery, you can harvest more that year. But still harvest at the same rate as in the previous year when you had a weaker year class and they caught less. So, it's not the number of fish. It's the rate at which you harvest. We try to put it in lay terms and called it current fishing pressure. We, in the model work with fishing mortality rates. Again, under current fishing mortality rates under both of the scenarios that we feel comfortable with the future condition of the stock is improving and that would suggest at some point if one of those is proven to be right that fishing pressure or fishing mortality can be increased.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Well, how would you add something to this resolution to assure that we're going to look at that possibility in the future?

Commissioner Jenkins: We do it every year.

Chairman Jones: Tee John, I think it's by statute that we review and send to the Legislature just that which we are doing right now. So, I mean, statutorily we have an annual review basically is what it amounts to.

Commissioner Mialjevich:  $\dots$  work on assumptions and I would like to make the assumption...

Chairman Jones: That is the law as I perceive it.

Commissioner Mialjevich: I know but we have the assumption that there is going to be a point in time when there is going to be extra harvest. O.k. So, why not start looking at the possibility of that extra harvest now and if it isn't there you don't do it. I'm not saying vote for this or that permanent right now. I'm just saying what is preventing us, if we are going to be fair and equitable, we're going to look at this other things about recreational surveys and catch-and-release. Why can't we look at the feasibility if there is available fish for harvest through this Finfish Task Force to be prepared. That's all I'm asking for. To be prepared. Would you object to adding that to your resolution? What harm is it going to go?

Commissioner Jenkins: I stand by the resolution as I read it, Tee John, and I don't know what else to say.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Well, I mean, can you give me a reason why you couldn't concede and let this be added. What harm is that going to do? To have the Finfish, Saltwater Finfish Task Force reconvene so that we can get a little bit of both sides talking together. I mean, we head that, I believe everybody

in the audience was in favor of that and look at the possibility, if in the future, if these scenarios are right

Commissioner Jenkins: All right. Can I answer that? I think, Joe you can correct me, but I think the Secretary or the Commission can reactivate that Task Force anytime they want to. Isn't that correct? I mean, we don't have to have a resolution or something going to the Legislature. We can do that at the next Commission, at the next Commission meeting. I mean, I don't think that's...

Commissioner Mialjevich: Can we do that? Can we do that?

Chairman Jones: Yeah.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Well, the only thing there, I guess we would have to add that no increase in current fishing mortality rate on red drum "at this time". If I could amend it.

Commissioner Jenkins: Say that again.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Just add "at this time."

Commissioner Jenkins: Where about's?

Commissioner Mialjevich: Right at the end. "The biological staff of Department of Wildlife & Fisheries have recommended no increase in current fishing mortality rate on red drum "at this time."

Commissioner Jenkins: I'll add that if my second will.

Commissioner Schneider: Your second will.

Commissioner Jenkins: Mr. Chairman, I call for the question.

Chairman Jones: O.k. Well, let, just. The question will be called here in a minute. For clarification point, once again to read in the whereas the substitute motion of Mr. Jenkins has been seconded by Mr. Schneider. There has been a slight change in the wordage of this and it will be:

WHEREAS, the biological staff of the Department of Wildlife & Fisheries have recommended no increase in current fishing mortality rate on red drum at this time, and

WHEREAS, therefore the only way...

Can we put that into the record? All right. The question has been called. That being the vote. We are voting on the subsequent or the substitute motion. That being brought forward by Mr. Jenkins. That being seconded by Mr. Schneider. That briefly stating that gamefish be continued. That being in our report to the Legislature. I'm going to call for the vote by hand and at this time all that are in favor for this motion, please raise your hand. Hands raised by Chairman Jones, and Commissioners Jenkins, Schneider and Cormier. All that are

opposed? Hands raised by Commissioners Gisclair, Mialjevich and Vujnovich. It is duly noted that the motion carries.

Commissioner Mialjevich: I would like it to reflect, because I don't want to hear what I heard on the radio this morning that the Commission voted for or against something. I think the news media should reflect that certain Commissioners voted for something and certain Commissioners voted against it cause they didn't agree with gamefish status. Thank you.

Chairman Jones: Thank you. O.k. We have another point of order here. Be it duly noted that this will be included in our red drum report to the Legislature. I will add my signature to it today so that we can get it sent off. We have another point of question here that was brought up and I would like to ask that we suspend the rules.

Commissioner Jenkins: I move that we suspend the rules to consider another motion.

Chairman Jones: Mr. Jenkins moves that we suspend the rules. Mr. Gisclair seconds. All in favor say aye. 0.k., that's seven to nothing. We need to discuss an issue concerning the trapping season. As I understand it, I would like to call Mr. Johnnie Tarver forward please.

Mr. Johnnie Tarver: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Jones: I would like to make a motion that we put this on the agenda. We have suspended the rules and that vote was to put this new item on the agenda which Mr. Tarver will bring forward. Please remain seated quietly, please. This will just take a second. Yes sir. Quiet, please.

Mr. Johnnie Tarver: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The trappers in the southeast region of Louisiana have requested a 31 day extension for trapping of furbearers. In the area to remain open is bordered on the west by the western boundary of Terrebonne Parish to U.S. Highway 90, then west along U.S. Highway 90 to the East Guide Levee of the Atchafalaya Basin, then north to I-10. northern boundary is Interstate 10 east to Baton Rouge, then east there to Interstate 12 to Slidell, then east on the Interstate 10 to the State Line. The extension of this trapping season is the affected area shall be March 1-31. Now, this 31 day extension was requested because of the hot and rainy weather we had for the first part of December and the first half of January, the same type of weather prevailed. This prevented trapping of many animals and the majority of the season has been gone and trappers were unable to get out into the marsh. There are large numbers of nutria reported. Department of Wildlife and Fisheries aerial surveys confirm that there are damaged marsh areas because of overpopulation of nutria in St. Charles, Jefferson, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Orleans and St. Tammany Parishes. The Fur and Alligator Council met on the 16th and approved a resolution supporting this extension request, therefore, I ask the Commission to entertain a 31 day extension beginning March 1 through March 31 and I have a Declaration of Emergency that I read to you earlier. If you have any questions, I would be glad to answer them.

Chairman Jones: I do not. I would like to, Mr. Puckett, am I correct in that we have to vote on putting this as an item on the agenda.

Mr. Don Puckett: As I understand it...

Chairman Jones: We voted to suspend the rules and put this item on the agenda in one motion, I think.

Mr. Don Puckett: Yes, and as I understand it, that motion was made and seconded by Mr. Gisclair without objection. That will basically serve as your vote to put it on the agenda, so now you have the main item before you to vote on the rule.

Chairman Jones: O.k. As in that Declaration of Emergency, I don't have it right here in front of me. Hold on a second. Johnnie. Have we read this?

Mr. Johnnie Tarver: Yes sir I read it.

Chairman Jones: I think you just read it, didn't you?

Mr. Johnnie Tarver: Yes sir.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Let's vote.

Chairman Jones: I am going to call for a vote.

Commissioner Jenkins: I am going to make a motion that we approve the Declaration of Emergency written by Mr. Tarver.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Second by Tee John. Let's go.

Chairman Jones: All in favor, aye. (The motion carried.) Thank you Mr. Tarver. Let's keep the traps out and catch a lot.

Commissioner Mialjevich: Make a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Schneider: I move that we adjourn.

Chairman Jones: There has been a motion by Mr. Schneider that we adjourn. It has been seconded by Tee John. Did you second it, Tee John? All in favor of closing this meeting, say aye.

## LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

FEBRUARY 25, 1993

BERT H. JONES CHAIRMAN

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

The following constitute minutes of the Commission Meeting and are not a verbatim transcript of the proceedings.

Tapes of the meetings are kept at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

2000 Quail Drive

Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808

For more information call (504) 765-2806

### **AGENDA**

# LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA FEBRUARY 25, 1993

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#### MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING

OF

### LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

Thursday, February 25, 1993

Chairman Bert H. Jones presiding.

James H. Jenkins, Jr. Perry Gisclair
Joseph B. Cormier
Jeff Schneider
Pete Vujnovich
Tee John Mialjevich

Secretary Joe L. Herring was also present.

The Red Drum Report; Including Commission Recommendation to Legislature Relative to Gamefish Status of Red Drum was the main topic for discussion at this Special Meeting. Chairman Jones mentioned that the House Natural Resources Committee felt the Commission was not in complete compliance under statute in reporting to the Legislature. There was also a discrepancy in the interpretation of the data in the original report adopted February 4, 1993.

Mr. John Roussel stated there was an error in the calculation in one of the processes of the report. This error had no impact on the current status of red drum or the future status of red drum. The impact was on the possible commercial allocation that would result from bag limits.

Commissioner Jenkins made a motion to accept the report dated February 18, 1993 and include the correction. Commissioner Vujnovich seconded the motion. Commissioner Mialjevich requested classification on why the numbers changed. Chairman Jones asked for public comments concerning the adoption of the new report and received none. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Jenkins stated that he understood after the last meeting that most recreational fishermen consistently took over the bag limit and asked for Mr. Roussel to address his confusion over this. Mr. Roussel explained that approximately 1 to 3 1/2% of the anglers surveyed took over the bag limit.

Chairman Jones asked if the Commission wanted to hear the public comments on the inclusion of a Commission recommendation to the Legislature relative to gamefish status at this time. Commissioner Mialjevich asked if the original report approved at the February 4 Commission Meeting was ever sent to the Legislature and asked the reason for not sending it after that meeting.

Commissioner Jenkins mentioned concerns over the accuracy of the report, and the fact that the Oversight Committee told them it needed to be looked at again. Commissioner Mialjevich asked for a copy of the letter from the Oversight Committee directing the Commission to look at this issue again. Chairman Jones read a letter from Representative Sammy Theriot. Commissioner Mialjevich asked if he was correct in assuming that someone from the Department contacted Mr. Theriot and told him that the Commission had not discussed gamefish status and this was what brought about the letter from Mr. Theriot. Chairman Jones was not aware of what transpired to warrant the letter from Mr. Theriot. Chairman Jones then called for public comments.

Mr. Steve Shook, representing charter boats, stated there has been a tremendous decline in redfish. Of 151 days fished, only 19 limits of redfish were caught. In the 71 days of wintertime fishing, only 2 limits of redfish were caught. Commissioner Mialjevich asked Mr. Shook if he agreed with the Department's biologists' assessment the fish are coming back; and then to clarify, asked if the reports by the National Marine Fisheries and Wildlife and Fisheries were severely inaccurate.

Mr. Thomas Gonzales, a commercial fisherman, stated the problem with redfish was with Wildlife and Fisheries allowing out of state fishermen to come in and kill the spawning stock. He then commented on the fine for being caught with a redfish on the boat, including mandatory jail.

Mr. Corky Perret mentioned that the bull drum was a federal fishery in the EEZ and not to blame the Department or the Commission for the fishery that took place in the federal waters.

Mr. Bo Weber, a fisherman for most of his life, presented a few observations he has made. The redfish problem was caused by the introduction of blackened redfish and the ensuing fishing of redfish by commercial fishermen. When the stocks began decreasing, the Federal Government closed redfishing in federal waters. the state closed commercial fishing to redfish, recreational limits went from 50 to 5. Now, when redfish are just beginning to come back, the commercial fishermen want to wipe them out again, remarked Mr. Weber. Then Mr. Weber commented on the amount of money spent by recreational fishermen in the State and how much would be lost if the recreational limits were dropped from 5 fish to 3 fish. Mr. Weber also stated gill nets should be banned Commissioner Mialjevich inquired about the limits completely. dropping from 5 fish to 3 fish for recreational fishermen, then on the 48,000 pounds of redfish that came from Mississippi. He asked what percent of the money spent by recreational fishermen was for saltwater fishing, and what was the ripple effect when that fish was served at a restaurant or at the retail outlet.

Commissioner Jenkins stated he thought this time was for public comments and then afterwards the Commission discussion would follow. Chairman Jones mentioned that it was time for public comments and then the Commission would follow with discussion and possible questions to speakers.

Mr. Steve Shaddock, State Secretary for GCCA, provided a historical view. Mr. Shaddock stated that Mr. Gerald Adkins, a Department biologist, reported the decline in redfish population was a result of overfishing with gill nets and that purse seining was what brought it to the attention of everyone. You can't regulate what you can't count and what you can't control. A tagging program with GCCA is ongoing and a lot of catch and release is occurring. Not enough data is available to reopen the fishery, the department does not have the resource to monitor the commercial catch, and there is a need for more enforcement. Recreational anglers, who represent the best optimum use of the resource, did not cause the problem. It was caused by commercial fishermen.

Mr. Pete Gerica, President of the Lake Pontchartrain Fishing Association, stated that the commercial fishermen did not kill all the redfish. Mother Nature caused the hole in the fishery. Then he stated that the gill nets could be fished with a tagging system where you would have to count every fish that was caught. Then he stated that the Constitution gives the right to fish and if he has to, he will fight the Commission.

Mr. Ted Loupe, from Leeville, commented that commercial fishermen would be happy with a hook and line industry. Loupe looked at redfishing from a recreational side and stated numbers mentioned at the meeting were misleading. 75% of the boats sold in Louisiana are for freshwater fishing and the other 25% are mainly for offshore fishing. The look at commercial fishing for redfish showed that over 30,000 commercial fishermen (shrimp, crab and oyster industry) will be hurt if gamefish status remained. The main problem was no one was looking at the whole picture. Loupe's concern was the impact gamefish status on redfish would have on the shrimp and crab industry. Mr. Loupe read excerpts from several newspaper articles on redfish, then reiterated that there are too many unanswered questions on the impact of gamefish status Mr. John Roussel mentioned that he has read some studies which shows that redfish eat approximately 4% of their body weight per day; but to state what the impact will be on shrimp or crabs, he did not know.

Mr. Jim Bourge, Abbeville, read R.S. 56:638.5, Section 5, as: "Conservation and management measures shall, where practicable, promote efficiency in conservation and that no such measure shall have economic allocation as its purpose". He then mentioned that anything the Commission does should be fair and equitable to all fishermen. Then Mr. Bourge asked for supporting data that showed commercial fishermen were directly responsible for the problems

with redfish. Mr. Bourge reminded the Commission of the actions that took place at the February 4th Regular Meeting and mentioned that gamefish status could have been discussed under item #11 on the agenda, but now a special meeting had been called to discuss same. A third option was presented to the Commissioners by Mr. Bourge, and that was to leave the report as it was voted on February 4 and let certain Commissioners be accountable to the Legislature. Mr. Bourge then presented Chairman Jones with a request that "under the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act 49:960B, I hereby request the disqualification of Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission Member Jimmy Jenkins from voting on the red drum recommendation to the Legislature on the grounds that he can not afford a fair and impartial consideration of this matter".

Mr. Mike Cazes, a fishermen, mentioned the problems Mississippi is having with enforcing the limits on redfish in that state. Mr. Cazes also thought the effects of Hurricane Andrew should be looked at with regard to recreational fishermen possibly looking to saltwater areas for fishing. He felt, with this being the fourth year of a proposed 9 year plan to study redfish, we should allow it to go on and then study its effects. He would be in favor of seeing a total removal of all nets in the waters and a commercial rod and reel fishery with a tag system. The 1991 recreational catch of redfish was 734,691 pounds of red drum. Mr. John Roussel pointed out that this figure was not in pounds, but in numbers of fish.

Mr. Henry Truelove pointed out that the commercial fishermen he was associated with were not ready to go to a hook and line fishery. He then stated the commercial fishermen are seeing large numbers of fish, thought the biologists were reporting large numbers of fish, and he hoped the charter boat captains would find more fish. Mr. Truelove hopes to see the day when the resources of the State are managed to where they benefit both sides. He then requested the Saltwater Finfish Task Force be reinstated.

Mr. Jeff Poe, a guide in Cameron Parish, remarked that commercial fishermen caught 795,017 pounds of speckled trout and bought 900 licenses last year. He then mentioned comparisons in amounts of fish caught between 1975 and last year in Cameron Parish and stated that there was a problem. Either there is not any fish or the fish caught are not being reported.

Mr. Bob Guilbeau, a restaurant owner in Lafayette, explained how his business has been affected by the closure of redfish and speckled trout. He stated he hopes to sell redfish and speckled trout someday and also hopes it works out to where everyone can get the resource. He then advised the Commission to make the best decision for the fish.

Mr. Cornel Arceneaux, La. Association of Coastal Anglers, encouraged the Commission to continue putting Louisiana resources and Louisiana first. The organization's position is to maintain If it would be taken off, we the gamefish status for redfish. would be taking a step backwards. The only way to protect redfish Mr. Arceneaux suggested the is to keep it as a gamefish. Commission direct a study on the economic impact of eliminating gill net fishing and replacing it with a rod and reel commercial fishery. Then Mr. Arceneaux complimented the Enforcement Division on a well done job with the limited resources they have. stated, with redfish as a gamefish, the commercial take of black drum sky rocketed, and asked what was the status of the black drum stock. He then stated that the La. Association of Coastal Anglers was not anti-commercial.

Mr. Karl Turner, La. Seafood Promotion & Marketing Board, explained why gamefish status should be changed. But first, Mr. Turner read excerpts of articles from Mr. Joe Macaluso and Mr. Bob Marshall and then stated what was the issue for the meeting. Mr. Turner gave the following explanation for why gamefish status should not continue on redfish: in a survey conducted by the Board, 82% of the people of the State of Louisiana answered they would like to see a commercial quota for redfish so it can be served in restaurants and grocery stores; economic justifications; and for cultural reasons. He further stated the reason people go fishing was to relax, have fun and be outdoors. Mr. Turner asked that, as the stock improves, let the consumers have access to the resource.

Mr. Gene Hickman, a commercial fisherman, stated he does not see where redfish are in danger, but sees the marshes and land eroding from under us.

Mr. Henry Martinez, a commercial fisherman from St. Bernard Parish, stated you needed to go to the right places to find the redfish. Then Mr. Martinez mentioned that everything suffers when one fishery is taken away. Mr. Martinez asked the Commission to help them out by allowing a limit of 25 or 50 per person per day to be placed on the commercial take of redfish.

Mr. Calvin Dufrene, a professional guide, stated the last winter was the worst one for redfish. He reported catching only one limit of redfish. In the marsh from Lafitte to Grand Isle to Cow Island Pass to Lake Raccourci and back to Lafitte, there are not as many schools of fish as some people think. Mr. Dufrene also stated the commercial fishermen and sport fishermen need to quit fighting and get together and try to solve the problem. Then he stated the fish should be considered first. The freeze of 1989 was detrimental to the fishery and now there are only a few fish.

Mr. Jim Bourge suggested that if both recommendations would have been read before the public comments, things would have been

simplified. Chairman Jones stated he was unaware of any recommendations by the Commission.

Mr. Jesse Fontenot from St. Mary Parish represented the East St. Mary Parish Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Fontenot had hoped that relations would be better between commercial and recreational There had been a lot of talk about the redfish fishermen. affecting 30,000 commercial fishermen but in 1990, between the outof-state and in the state, a total of 1,267 commercial fishermen were affected. The last year Louisiana could commercially fish redfish, they harvested 1,600,000 in 176 days, which was an average of 4.58 fish per person per day. Mr. Fontenot also disagreed with the talk about the gill nets not damaging the fish. Then, he asked for Wildlife and Fisheries to make people check their crab traps because the crabs are very, very small. Mr. Fontenot felt it very important to continue protecting the redfish. He also sees a big problem with St. Mary Parish having only 3 agents and hoped for better enforcement and better management.

Mr. Mike Fernet, a charter boat owner in Venice, felt the question should be for the species itself and not the sport fishermen against the commercial fishermen. The Commission needs to decide if the redfish stock in the marsh is sufficient for harvesting or if there is enough broodstock in the coastal areas of the Gulf to replenish the stock taken from the marsh. If this can not be determined at this time, then gamefish status should remain until it can be determined that enough redfish can reproduce.

Mr. Gary Clark with the Louisiana Bass Fishing Association stated his problem was, if redfish was removed from being a sportfish, would bass, bream or sac-a-lait be next?

Mr. Al Convenudo, President and Founder of Ocean Adventures of Louisiana, remarked his company was starting a redfish farm in Central America because it was not feasible to do so in Louisiana. Reasons for this include the climate, threat of a major freeze, coastal pollution and bird predation. The market wants a fish of a standard size on an on-going supply basis and wants a farm raised product. Mr. Convenudo believed that if commercial fishing for redfish would be allowed in Louisiana, there should be a quota on the amount caught and a quota on the number of licenses issued. If there is a quota for commercial catch of redfish, you should have size limits, and limits on poundage and/or the number of fish.

Mr. Ted Loupe clarified that the crab population is not on a decline by recalling landings for the years 1989, 1990, and 1991.

Chairman Jones mentioned a report in their packets that the Department received 65 telephone calls from the public and all were in favor of gamefish status.

Commissioner Gisclair requested that a resolution be passed out so it can be included with the other public comments, discussed, and questions answered if needed. Then Commissioner Gisclair asked Mr. Don Puckett read the resolution and it reads as follows:

### "RESOLUTION

### LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

### February 25, 1993

- WHEREAS, this Commission, pursuant to R.S. 56:6(27) adopted the Red Drum Report prepared by Department staff dated February 4, 1993, and
- whereas, that Report, while discussing gamefish status did not contain within it a recommendation as to the retention or removal of gamefish status for red drum, and
- whereas, this Commission hereby includes such a recommendation to the Legislature to accompany and supplement the technical report prepared by the Department, and
- WHEREAS, biological data from recent years shows that current fishing pressure has and will continue to improve the red drum populations now and into the future, and
- WHEREAS, the designation of "gamefish" as it relates to the current status of red drum is of little biological utility, but rather it is a political approach to allocation, and
- WHEREAS, 81% of Louisiana voters surveyed in a 1991 statewide poll indicated a preference for a redfish management policy based on a commercial harvest that would enable them to buy Louisiana redfish in restaurants and grocery stores.
- THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby recommends to the Legislature that gamefish status for red drum be removed in accordance with the following conditions:
  - (a) that the Secretary and his staff be directed by the Legislature to develop a plan on or before January 1, 1994 to implement a commercial harvest of red drum;
  - (b) that the plan provide for no reduction in the current recreational bag limit and for the equitable allocation of the available harvest between the

commercial and recreational fisheries based upon the historical distribution of the catch; and

(c) that this plan incorporate recommendations for strict controls and regulations which may include, but not be limited to, the establishment of a permit system, a limited entry system and/or a tagging system."

Commissioner Gisclair asked, "On the 65 calls received from the public, 24 said not to reduce the creel limit from 5 to 2, where did this information come from?" It was not the Commission's intention to reduce the recreational creel limit.

Commissioner Mialjevich questioned if the Department records the phone calls that were received. Other questions Commissioner Mialjevich asked to the people who made comments included, what was "fair"; 2 people referred a 9 year plan and he asked what a 9 year plan was? Commissioner Mialjevich stated he did not want to end the recreational fishery, but wanted to see if there was any extra fish, and that the commercial industry get them. Then he stated, the overfishing of redfish by recreational fishermen was an enforcement problem. Gamefish is a social and political approach. It has nothing to do with biology or conservation and is simply an expression of greed. All the people of Louisiana should have an equal share of the resource. If anglers would increase the number of trips for redfish, your protection of redfish is gone. With the damage from Hurricane Andrew, freshwater fishermen will have to turn to saltwater fishing and gamefish status will again not Then, Commissioner Mialjevich asked Mr. Harry protect the fish. Blanchet what should the number of escapement be in order to have a healthy fishery; what was the difference between escapement and spawning stock biomass; and then he questioned the percentages as shown on the two scenario graphs in Figure 8 of the report. With these percentages, was that why the Department was predicting the redfish spawning stock and biomass was increasing, and what will the projected numbers read in 1993 and 1994. He added, if there is no control over recreational harvest, any gains that may have occurred could be wiped out with overfishing by recreational fishermen; then stated that as long as redfish has the gamefish status, there is no hope for fish to be allocated to anyone else.

Commissioner Cormier inquired of Commissioner Gisclair if the allocation is more of a political approach. Also, Commissioner Cormier addressed several comments made by the public. These included possibilities; everything is possible and decisions should be based on facts; the social issues should be handled by the legislators for the people of the state; total compliance is impossible; black people not being able to afford bass boats should not have been brought up. Commissioner Cormier then suggested the Legislature should order the Department to make a final study as

to what can be feasible and gives all the answers needed. He then stated there is not enough information available right now.

4. 1 -.

Chairman Jones asked for a motion on the recommendation to the Legislature of the status of red drum. Commissioner Gisclair made a motion on the resolution read by Mr. Puckett and was seconded by Commissioner Mialjevich.

Commissioner Jenkins made a substitute motion to adopt the resolution which he read as:

### "RESOLUTION

- WHEREAS, this Commission, pursuant to R.S. 56:6 (27) adopted the Red Drum Report prepared by Department staff dated February 4, 1993, and
- whereas, that Report, while discussing gamefish status did not contain within it a recommendation as to the retention or removal of gamefish status for red drum, and
- whereas, this Commission hereby includes such a recommendation to the Legislature to accompany and supplement the technical report prepared by the Department, and
- WHEREAS, five years ago the Legislature declared red drum a gamefish subject to a three year "sunset" provision, and
- WHEREAS, by Acts 1991, No. 157, the Louisiana Legislature permanently established red drum as a gamefish, and
- WHEREAS, biological staff of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries have recommended no increase in current fishing mortality rate on red drum, and
- WHEREAS, therefore the only way that an allowable commercial take of red drum could occur without an increase in current mortality rates would be to reduce the recreational catch limits, and
- whereas, it is the opinion of the Commission that such a reallocation of the red drum resources would not be in the best interest of the State from either a social or economic standpoint.
- THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that this Commission hereby respectfully recommends to the Legislature that the present gamefish status of red drum be retained.
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission hereby directs the Secretary to have the appropriate staff members make additional studies including "catch and release" and

"marine recreational surveys", which will enhance the Department's ability to evaluate this fishery."

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Commissioner Schneider seconded the substitute motion made by Commissioner Jenkins. Mr. Don Puckett made a technical point in that the report dated February 18, 1993 should be referenced in each of the resolutions. Commissioner Jenkins noted he would change his resolution to read February 18, 1993. Commissioner Gisclair asked for a copy of Commissioner Jenkins' resolution. Chairman Jones asked if the date should be the date of the adoption of the report, which would have been the 25th, or was it the 18th?

Commissioner Cormier asked Commissioner Jenkins if the catch and release survey and marine recreational surveys would answer the questions once and for all for the Commission. Commissioner Jenkins stated that this was just a general statement but it did include specific studies. Also Commissioner Jenkins reminded that, in the red drum report, there was a recommendation for the Department to petition the National Marine Fisheries to do an offshore stock survey and this should help to evaluate the situation.

Commissioner Mialjevich stated on, "WHEREAS, therefore the only way that an allowable commercial take of red drum could occur without an increase in current mortality rates would be to reduce the recreational catch limits," that he did not see where this point would have to occur for the commercial fishermen to have a harvest and asked why the statement was made. Commissioner Jenkins reminded the Commission adopted the Department's recommendation that no more fish should be taken out of the fishery. Commissioner Mialjevich suggested, in order to get back on talking terms, the Finfish Task Force should be reconvened. Then Commissioner Mialjevich asked the biologists why they were sure that one more fish could not be taken out of the spawning stock biomass. further asked how could something be added to the resolution to make sure the possibility of an increase is looked at in the future. Chairman Jones commented that it was by statute that we review the red drum fishery every year. Commissioner Mialjevich suggested looking at the possibility or feasibility of an extra harvest now in order to be prepared. He also asked that the Saltwater Finfish Task Force reconvene. Commissioner Mialjevich requested amending the resolution to add "at this time". Commissioner Jenkins made a motion to add the new wording to his resolution and was seconded by Commissioner Schneider. Chairman Jones read, for clarification purposes, the new "Whereas" in the resolution. The vote, by hand, on Commissioner Jenkins' motion was called for at this time by Chairman Jones. Commissioner Schneider, Commissioner Jenkins, Commissioner Cormier and Chairman Jones voted in favor of the motion. Commissioner Mialjevich, Commissioner Vujnovich and Commissioner Gisclair voted against the motion. Chairman Jones noted the motion carried.

Commissioner Mialjevich asked the news media to note that certain members voted for the resolution and others did not because they did not agree with gamefish status.

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(The full text of the Resolution is made a part of the record.)

#### RESOLUTION

# LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

### February 25, 1993

- WHEREAS, this Commission, pursuant to R.S. 56:6 (27) adopted the Red Drum Report prepared by Department staff dated February 18, 1993, and
- whereas, that Report, while discussing gamefish status did not contain within it a recommendation as to the retention or removal of gamefish status for red drum, and
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- WHEREAS, therefore the only way that an allowable commercial take of red drum could occur without an increase in current mortality rates would be to reduce the recreational catch limits, and
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- THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that this Commission hereby respectfully recommends to the Legislature that the present gamefish status of red drum be retained.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission hereby directs the Secretary to have the appropriate staff members make additional studies including "catch and release" and "marine recreational surveys", which will enhance the Department's ability to evaluate this fishery.

Bert H. Jones, Chairman Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Commission Joe L. Herring, Secretary Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries

Chairman Jones asked the Commission to suspend the rules to consider another motion. Commissioner Jenkins moved for the Commission to suspend the rules and was seconded by Commissioner The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Johnnie Tarver presented a Declaration of Emergency for the Extension of the 1992-93 Trapping Season for the Commission's consideration. Mr. Tarver stated that the trappers in the southeast region of the State were requesting an extension of March 1 through March 31 to the furbearer trapping season. The hot and rainy weather for the first part of December and a portion of January was the reason for the request. An overpopulation of nutria does exist which would not cause problems with extending the season. The Fur and Alligator Council has approved the extension request. Chairman Jones called for the vote on the Declaration of Emergency. Commissioner Jenkins made a motion to approve the Declaration of Emergency and was seconded by Commissioner Mialjevich. The motion passed unanimously.

(The full text of the Declaration of Emergency is made a part of the record.)

# DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

In accordance with the emergency provisions of R.S. 49:953(B), the Administrative Procedure Act, R.S. 49:967 which allows the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to use emergency procedures to set the furbearer trapping season and the rules regulating it, and R.S. 56:260, the 1992-93 trapping season is hereby extended for 31 days in the southeastern part of Louisiana as follows:

The thirty-one (31) day extension for the trapping of furbearers by licensed trappers shall be:

The area that will remain open is bordered on the west by the western boundary of Terrebonne Parish to U.S. Highway 90, then west along U.S. Highway 90 to the east guide levee of the Atchafalaya Basin, then north to Interstate 10. The northern boundary is Interstate 10 east to Baton Rouge, then east on Interstate 12 to Slidell, then east on Interstate 10 to the state line.

The extension of this trapping season in the affected area shall be from March 1, 1993 through March 31, 1993.

Bert H. Jones Chairman

Then Commissioner Schneider made a motion to Adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Commissioner Mialjevich.

Joe L. Herring

Secretary

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MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING

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OF

### LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

Thursday, February 25, 1993

Chairman Bert H. Jones presiding.

James H. Jenkins, Jr. Perry Gisclair Joseph B. Cormier Jeff Schneider Pete Vujnovich Tee John Mialjevich

Secretary Joe L. Herring was also present.

The Red Drum Report; Including Commission Recommendation to Legislature Relative to Gamefish Status of Red Drum was the main topic for discussion at this Special Meeting. Chairman Jones mentioned that the House Natural Resources Committee felt the Commission was not in complete compliance under statute in reporting to the Legislature. There was also a discrepancy in the interpretation of the data in the original report adopted February 4, 1993.

Mr. John Roussel stated there was an error in the calculation in one of the processes of the report. This error had no impact on the current status of red drum or the future status of red drum. The impact was on the possible commercial allocation that would result from bag limits.

Commissioner Jenkins made a motion to accept the report dated February 18, 1993 and would include the correction. Commissioner Vujnovich seconded the motion. Commissioner Mialjevich requested clarification on why the numbers changed. Chairman Jones asked for public comments concerning the adoption of the new report and received none. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Jenkins stated that he understood after the last meeting that most recreational fishermen consistently took over the bag limit and asked for Mr. Roussel to address his confusion over this. Mr. Roussel explained that approximately 1 to 3 1/2% of the anglers surveyed took over the bag limit.

Chairman Jones asked if the Commission wanted to hear the public comments on the inclusion of a Commission recommendation to the Legislature relative to gamefish status at this time. Commissioner Mialjevich asked if the original report approved at the February 4 Commission Meeting was ever sent to the Legislature and asked the reason for not sending it after that meeting.

Committee

Commissioner Jenkins mentioned concerns over the accuracy of the report, and the fact that the Oversight Committee told them it needed to be looked at again. Commissioner Mialjevich asked for a copy of the letter from the Oversight directing the Commission to look at this issue again. Chairman Jones read a letter from Representative Sammy Theriot. Commissioner Mialjevich asked if he was correct in assuming that someone from the Department contacted Mr. Theriot and told him that the Commission had not discussed gamefish status and this was what brought about the letter from Mr. Theriot. Chairman Jones was not aware of what transpired to warrant the letter from Mr. Theriot. Chairman Jones then called for public comments.

Mr. Steve Shook, representing charter boats, stated there has been a tremendous decline in redfish. Of 151 days fished, only 19 limits of redfish were caught. In the 71 days of wintertime fishing, only 2 limits of redfish were caught. Commissioner Mialjevich, asked Mr. Shook if he agreed with the Department's biologists of the assessment the fish are coming back; and then to clarify, asked if the reports by the National Marine Fisheries and the Wildlife and Fisheries were severely inaccurate.

Mr. Thomas Gonzales, a commercial fisherman, stated the problem with redfish was with the Wildlife and Fisheries allowing out of state fishermen to come in and kill the spawning stock and the Senator's of the State. He then commented on the fine for being caught with a redfish on the boat of mandatory jail.

Mr. Corky Perret mentioned that the bull drum was a federal fishery in the EEZ and not to blame the Department of the Commission for the fishery that took place in the federal waters.

Mr. Bo Weber, a fisherman/for most of his life, presented a few observations he has made. I Redfish problem was caused by the introduction of blackened redfish and the ensuing fishing of redfish by commercial fishermen. When the stocks began decreasing, the Federal Government closed redfishing in federal waters. 1987, the state closed commercial fishing to redfish, and recreational limits went from 50 to 5. Now when redfish are just beginning to come back, the commercial fishermen want to wipe them out again, remarked Mr. Weber. Then Mr. Weber commented on the amount of money spent by recreational fishermen in the State and how much would be lost if the recreational limits were dropped from 5 fish to 3 fish. Mr. Weber also stated gill nets should be banned Commissioner Mialjevich inquired about the limits completely. dropping from 5 fish to 3 fish for recreational fishermen, then on the 48,000 pounds of redfish that came from Mississippic What percent of the money spent by recreational fishermen was for saltwater fishing, and what was the ripple effect when that fish was served at a restaurant or at the retail outlet.

Henske

discussion

Commissioner Jenkins stated he thought this time was for public comments and then afterwards the Commission would follow. Chairman Jones mentioned that it was time for public comments and then the Commission would follow with discussion and possible questions to speakers.

Mr. Steve Shaddock, State Secretary for GCCA, provided a historical view. Mr. Shaddock stated that Mr. Gerald Adkins, a Department biologist, reported the decline in redfish population was a result of overfishing with gill nets and that purse seining was what brought it to the attention of everyone. You can't regulate what you can't count and what you can't control. A tagging program with GCCA is ongoing and a lot of catch and release department is occurring. Not enough data is available to reopen the fishery, decay not have the resource to monitor the commercial catch, and there is was a need for more enforcement. Recreational anglers, who represent the best optimum use of the resource, did not cause the problem it was caused by commercial fishermen.

Mr. Pete Gerica, President of the Lake Pontchartrain Fishing Association, stated that the commercial fishermen did not kill all the redfish; Mother Nature caused the whole in the fishery. Then he stated that the gill nets could be fished with a tagging system where you would have to count every fish that was caught. Then he wentson and stated that the Constitution gives the right to fish and if have to, will fight the Commission.

Mr. Ted Loupe, from Leeville, commented that commercial fishermen would be happy with a hook and line industry. Loupe looked at redfishing from a recreational side and stated numbers mentioned at the meeting were misleading 75% of the boats sold in Louisiana are for freshwater fishing and the other 25% are mainly for offshore fishing. The look at commercial fishing for redfish showed that over 30,000 commercial fishermen (shrimp, crab and oyster industry) will be hurt if gamefish status remained. main problem was no one was looking at the whole picture. Loupe's concern was the impact gamefish status on redfish would have on shrimp and crab industry. Mr. Loupe read excerpts from several newspaper articles on redfish, then reiterated that there are too many unanswered questions on the impact of gamefish status Mr. John Roussel mentioned that he has read some studies which shows that redfish eat approximately 4% of its body weight per day; but to state what the impact will be on shrimp or crabs, he did not know.

Mr. Jim Bourge, Abbeville, read R.S. 56:638.5, Section 5, as: "Conservation and management measures shall, where practicable, promote efficiency in conservation and that no such measure shall have economic allocation as its purpose". Then mentioned that anything the Commission does should be fair and equitable to all fishermen. Then Mr. Bourge asked for supporting data that showed commercial fishermen were directly responsible for the problems

Status

with redfish. Mr. Bourge reminded the Commission of the actions that took place/at the February 4th Regular Meeting and mentioned that gamefish could have been discussed under item #11 on the but agenda, and now a special meeting had been called to discuss same. A third option was presented to the Commissioners by Mr. Bourge, and that was to leave the report as it was voted on February 4 and let certain Commissioners be accountable to the Legislature. Bourge then presented Chairman Jones with a request that "under the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act 49:960B, I hereby request the disqualification of Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission Member Jimmy Jenkins from voting on the red drum recommendation to the Legislature on the grounds that he can not afford a fair and impartial consideration of this matter".

15 \_\_\_\_Mr. Mike Cazes, a fishermen, mentioned that the problems Mississippi are having with enforcing the limits on redfish in their state. Mr. Cazes also thought the effects of Hurricane Andrew on-redfish should be looked at with regard to recreational He fishermen possibly looking to saltwater areas for fishing. Felt with this being the fourth year of a proposed 9 year plan to study redfish, to allow it to go on and then study its effects. Would be in favor of seeing a total removal of all nets in the waters and Skall a tag system. 1991 recreational catch of redfish was 734,691 pounds of red drum. Mr. John Roussel corrected that this figure was not in pounds, but pointed out in numbers of fish.

Mr. Henry Truelove pointed out that the commercial fishermen he was associated with were not ready to go to a hook and line fishery. Then stated the commercial fishermen are seeing large numbers of fish, thought the biologists were reporting large numbers of fish, and hoped the charter boat captains would find more fish. Mr. Truelove hopes to see the day when the resources of the State are managed to where they benefit both sides. /Then requested the Saltwater Finfish Task Force be reinstated.

Mr. Jeff Poe, a guide in Cameron Parish, remarked that commercial fishermen caught 795,017 pounds of speckled trout and bought sold 900 licenses last year. Then mentioned comparisons in amounts of fish caught between 1975 and last year in Cameron Parish and stated that there was a problem; gither there is not any fish or the fish caught is not being reported.

Mr. Bob Guilbeau, a restaurant owner in Lafayette, explained how his business has been affected by the closure of redfish and # speckled trout. Then stated he hopes to sell redfish and speckled trout someday and also hopes it works out to where everyone can get the resource. Then advised make the best decision for the fish.

Mr. Cornel Arceneaux, La. Association of Coastal Anglers, encouraged the Commission to continue putting Louisiana resources and Louisiana first. The organization's position is to maintain

the gamefish status for redfish; however, if it would be taken off,

We you would be taking a step backwards. The only way to protect

redfish was to keep it as a gamefish. Mr. Arceneaux suggested the

Commission direct a study on the economic impact of eliminating

gill net fishing and replace it with a rod and reel commercial

fishery. Then Mr. Arceneaux complimented the Enforcement Division

on a well done job with the limited resources they have. He stated

with redfish as a gamefish, the commercial take of black drum sky

rocketed, and asked what was the status of the black drum stock.

He then stated that the La. Association of Coastal Anglers was not

anti-commercial.

Mr. Karl Turner, La. Seafood Promotion & Marketing Board, explained why gamefish status should be changed. But first, Mr. Turner read excerpts of articles from Mr. Joe Macaluso and Mr. Bob Marshall and then stated what was the issue for the meeting. Mr. Turner gave the following explanation for why gamefish status should not continue on redfish: in a survey conducted by the Board, 82% of the people of the State of Louisiana answered they would like to see a commercial quota for redfish so it can be served in restaurants and grocery stores; economic justifications; and for cultural reasons. He further stated the reason people go fishing was to relax, have fun and be outdoors. Mr. Turner asked that as the stock improves, let the consumers have access to the resource.

Mr. Gene Hickman, a commercial fisherman in the marsh, stated he does not see where redfish in danger, but sees the marshes and land eroding from under us.

Mr. Henry Martinez, a commercial fisherman from St. Bernard Parish, stated you needed to go to the right places to find the redfish. Then, Mr. Martinez mentioned that everything suffers when one fishery is taken away. Mr. Martinez asked the Commission to help them out by allowing a limit of 25 or 50 per person per day to be placed on the commercial take of redfish.

Mr. Calvin Dufrene, a professional guide, stated the last winter was the worst one for redfish with catching only one limit of redfish. In the marsh from Lafitte to Grand Isle to Cow Island Pass to Lake Raccourci and back to Lafitte there are not as many schools of fish as some people think. Mr. Dufrene also stated the commercial fishermen and sport fishermen need to quit fighting and get together and try to solve the problem. Then he stated the fish should be considered first. The freeze of 1989 was detrimental to the fishery and now there are only a few fish.

Mr. Jim Bourge suggested that if both recommendations would have been read before the public comments, things would have been simplified. Chairman Jones stated he was unaware of any recommendations by the Commission.

Mr. Jesse Fontenot from St. Mary Parish represented the East St. Mary Parish Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Fontenot had hoped that relations would be better between commercial and recreational fishermen. There had been a lot of talk about the redfish affecting 30,000 commercial fishermen but in 1990, between the outof-state and in the state, a total of 1,267 commercial fishermen were affected. The last year Louisiana could commercially fish redfish, they harvested 1,600,000 in 176 days, which was an average of 4.58 fish per person per day. Mr. Fontenot also disagreed with the talk about the gill nets not damaging the fish. Then, he asked for Wildlife and Fisheries to make people check their crab traps because the crabs are very, very small. Mr. Fontenot felt it very important to continue protecting the redfish. He also sees a big problem with St. Mary Parish/only have 3 agents and hoped for better enforcement and better/management.

Mr. Mike Fernet, a charter boat owner in Venice, felt the question should be for the species itself and not the sport fishermen against the commercial fishermen. The Commission needs to decide if the redfish stock in the marsh is capable for harvesting or if there is enough broodstock in the coastal areas of the Gulf to replenish the stock taken from the marsh. If this can not be determined at this time, then gamefish status should remain until it can be determined that enough redfish can reproduce.

Sufficery

Mr. Gary Clark with the Louisiana Bass Fishing stated his problem was if redfish was removed from being a sportfish, would bass, bream or sac-a-lait be next?

Mr. Al Convenudo, President and Founder of Ocean Adventures of Louisiana, remarked his company was starting a redfish farm in Central America because it was not feasible to do so in Louisiana. Reasons for this include the climate, threat of a major freeze, coastal pollution and bird predation. The market wants a fish of a standard size on an on-going supply basis and wants a farm raised product. Mr. Convenudo believed that if commercial fishing for redfish would be allowed in Louisiana there should be a quota on the amount caught and a quota on the number of licenses issued. If there is a quota for commercial catch of redfish, you should have size limits, limits on poundage and/or the number of fish.

Mr. Ted Loupe clarified that the crab population is not on a decline by recalling landings for the years 1989, 1990, and 1991.

Chairman Jones mentioned a report in their packets that the Department received 65 telephone calls from the public and all were in favor of gamefish status.

Commissioner Gisclair requested that a resolution be passed out so it can be included in with the other public comments, discussed and questions answered if needed. Then Commissioner

Gisclair asked Mr. Don Puckett read the resolution and it reads as follows:

### "RESOLUTION

### LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

### February 25, 1993

- WHEREAS, this Commission, pursuant to R.S. 56:6(27) adopted the Red Drum Report prepared by Department staff dated February 4, 1993, and
- whereas, that Report, while discussing gamefish status did not contain within it a recommendation as to the retention or removal of gamefish status for red drum, and
- whereas, this Commission hereby includes such a recommendation to the Legislature to accompany and supplement the technical report prepared by the Department, and
- WHEREAS, biological data from recent years shows that current fishing pressure has and will continue to improve the red drum populations now and into the future, and
- WHEREAS, the designation of "gamefish" as it relates to the current status of red drum is of little biological utility, but rather it is a political approach to allocation, and
- whereas, 81% of Louisiana voters surveyed in a 1991 statewide poll indicated a preference for a redfish management policy based on a commercial harvest that would enable them to buy Louisiana redfish in restaurants and grocery stores.
- THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby recommends to the Legislature that gamefish status for red drum be removed in accordance with the following conditions:
  - (a) that the Secretary and his staff be directed by the Legislature to develop a plan on or before January 1, 1994 to implement a commercial harvest of red drum;
  - (b) that the plan provide for no reduction in the current recreational bag limit and for the equitable allocation of the available harvest between the commercial and recreational fisheries based upon the historical distribution of the catch; and

that this plan incorporate recommendations for strict controls and regulations which may include, but not be limited to, the establishment of a permit system, a limited entry system and/or a tagging system."

Commissioner Gisclair asked, on the 65 calls received from the public, 24 said not to reduce the creel limit from 5 to 2, where did this information come from? It was not the Commission's intention to reduce the recreational creel limit.

Commissioner Mialjevich questioned if the Department records the phone calls that were received. Other questions Commissioner Mialjevich asked to the people who made comments included what was // @ fair; 2 people referred a 9 year plan and asked what a 9 year plan was? Commissioner Mialjevich stated he did not want to end the recreational fishery, but wanted to see if there was any extra fish, that the commercial industry get them. Then/stated, the overfishing of redfish by recreational fishermen was an enforcement Gamefish is a social and political approach; it has nothing to do with biology or conservation and simply an expression of greed. All the people of Louisiana should have an equal share of the resource. If anglers would increase in number of trips for redfish, your protection of redfish is gone. With the damage from Hurricane Andrew, freshwater fishermen will have to turn to saltwater fishing and gamefish status will again not protect the fish. Then, Commissioner Mialjevich asked Mr. Harry Blanchet what should the number of escapement be in order to have a healthy fishery; what was the difference between escapement and spawning stock biomass; and then questioned the percentages as shown on the two scenario graphs in Figure 8 of the report with these percentages, was that why the Department was predicting the redfish spawning stock and biomass was increasing, what will the projected numbers read in 1993 and 1994 /if there is no control over He recreational harvest, any gains that may have occurred could be wiped out with overfishing by recreational fishermen; then stated that as long as redfish has the gamefish status, there is no hope for fish to be allocated to anyone else.

Commissioner Cormier inquired to Commissioner Gisclair if the allocation is more of a political approach. Also, Commissioner Cormier addressed several commence included possibilities; everything is possible and decisions should be based on facts; the social issues should be handled by the issues for the people of the state; total compliance; black the social not have been brought up. Commissioner Cormier then suggested the Legislature should order the Department to make a final study as to what can be feasible and will give all the answers needed.  $\sqrt{x}$  hen stated there is not enough information available right now.

Chairman Jones asked for a motion on the recommendation to the Legislature of the status of red drum. Commissioner Gisclair made a motion on the resolution read by Mr. Puckett and was seconded by Commissioner Mialjevich.

Commissioner Jenkins made a substitute motion to adopt the resolution which he read as:

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Commissioner Mialjevich asked the news media to note that certain members voted for the resolution and others did not because they did not agree with gamefish status.

(The full text of the Resolution is made a part of the record.)

#### RESOLUTION

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Because-of the hot and rainy weather for the first part of December and a portion of January was the reason for the request. An overpopulation of nutria does exist which would not cause problems with extending the season. The Fur and Alligator Council has approved the extension request. Chairman Jones called for the vote on the Declaration of Emergency. Commissioner Jenkins made a motion to approve the Declaration of Emergency and was seconded by Commissioner Mialjevich. The motion passed unanimously.

> (The full text of the Declaration of Emergency is made a part of the record.)

### DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

In accordance with the emergency provisions of R.S. 49:953(B), the Administrative Procedure Act, R.S. 49:967 which allows the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to use emergency procedures to set the furbearer trapping season and the rules regulating it, and R.S. 56:260, the 1992-93 trapping season is hereby extended for 31 days in the southeastern part of Louisiana as follows:

The thirty-one (31) day extension for the trapping of furbearers by licensed trappers shall be:

The area that will remain open is bordered on the west by the western boundary of Terrebonne Parish to U.S. Highway 90, then west along U.S. Highway 90 to the east guide levee of the Atchafalaya Basin, then north to Interstate 10. northern boundary is Interstate 10 east to Baton Rouge, then

east on Interstate 12 to Slidell, then east on Interstate 10 to the state line.

The extension of this trapping season in the affected area shall be from March 1, 1993 through March 31, 1993.

Bert H. Jones Chairman

Then Commissioner Schneider made a motion to Adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Commissioner Mialjevich.

Joe L. Herring Secretary

JLH:sch

J. Tenkins, J.

# LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION RESOLUTION

# February 25, 1993

- WHEREAS, This Commission, pursuant to R.S. 56:6 (27) adopted the Red Drum Report prepared by Department staff dated February (2), 1993, and
- WHEREAS, That Report, while discussing game fish status did not contain within it a recommendation as to the retention or removal of game fish status for red drum, and
- WHEREAS, This commission hereby includes such a recommendation to the Legislature to accompany and supplement the technical report prepared by the Department, and
- WHEREAS, Five years ago the Legislature declared red drum a game fish subject to a three-year "sunset" provision, and
- WHEREAS, Biological staff of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries have recommended no increase in current fishing mortality rate on red drum, and
- WHEREAS, Therefore the only way that an allowable commercial take of red drum could occur without an increase in current mortality rates would be to reduce the recreational catch limits, and
- WHEREAS, It is the opinion of the Commission that such a reallocation of the red drum resources would not be in the best interest of the State from either a social or economic standpoint.
- THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Commission hereby respectfully recommends to the Legislature that the present game fish status of red drum be retained.
- THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission hereby directs the Secretary to have the appropriate staff members make additional studies including "catch and release" and "marine recreational surveys", which will enhance the Department's ability to evaluate this fishery.

Bert Jones, Chairman

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Joe L. Herring, Secretary

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#### RESOLUTION

# LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

### February 25, 1993

- WHEREAS, this Commission, pursuant to R.S. 56:6(27) adopted the Red Drum Report prepared by Department staff dated February 4, 1993, and
- WHEREAS, that Report, while discussing gamefish status did not contain within it a recommendation as to the retention or removal of gamefish status for red drum, and
- whereas, this Commission hereby includes such a recommendation to the Legislature to accompany and supplement the technical report prepared by the Department, and
- WHEREAS, biological data from recent years shows that current fishing pressure has and will continue to improve the red drum populations now and into the future, and
- WHEREAS, the designation of "gamefish" as it relates to the current status of red drum is of little biological utility, but rather it is a political approach to allocation, and
- WHEREAS, 81% of Louisiana voters surveyed in a 1991 statewide poll indicated a preference for a redfish management policy based on a commercial harvest that would enable them to buy Louisiana redfish in restaurants and grocery stores.
- THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby recommends to the Legislature that gamefish status for red drum be removed in accordance with the following conditions:
  - (a) that the Secretary and his staff be directed by the Legislature to develop a plan on or before January 1, 1994 to implement a commercial harvest of red drum;
  - (b) that the plan provide for no reduction in the current recreational bag limit and for the equitable allocation of the available harvest between the commercial and recreational fisheries based upon the historical distribution of the catch; and
  - (c) that this plan incorporate recommendations for strict controls and regulations which may include, but not be limited to, the establishment of a permit system, a limited entry system and/or a tagging system.

# SPECIAL COMMISSION MEETING ROLL CALL

Thursday, February 25, 1993 Baton Rouge, LA Wildlife and Fisheries Building

	Attended	Absent
Bert Jones (Chairman)	<u> </u>	
Jimmy Jenkins	<u> </u>	
Perry Gisclair		
Tee John Mialjevich	<u> </u>	<del></del>
Joseph Cormier	···	
Jeff Schneider	~	
Peter Vujnovich	<u> </u>	

## Mr. Chairman:

There are Commissioners in attendance and we have a quorum. Secretary Herring is also present.

## AGENDA

LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION BATON ROUGE, LA February 25, 1993 2:00 P.M.

A. Roll Call

Red Drum Report; Including Commission Recommendation to Legislature Relative to Gamefish Status of Red Drum

# COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEM FOR SPECIAL COMMISSION MEETING February 25, 1993

Robert Beck (Luling): Keep redfish and speckled trout with gamefish status permanently in Louisiana and not allow commercial fishermen to take 3 away from recreational fishermen, so the commercial fishermen can start netting again.

<u>Lloyd Hebert</u> (Houma): Keep redfish and speckled trout with gamefish status permanently in Louisiana and not allow commercial fishermen to take 3 away from recreational fishermen, so the commercial fishermen can start netting again.

Mark Dufrene (Des Allemands): Keep redfish and speckled trout with gamefish status permanently in Louisiana and not allow commercial fishermen to take 3 away from recreational fishermen, so the commercial fishermen can start netting again.

Terry Holton (Luling): Keep redfish and speckled trout with gamefish status and also to leave the quota as it is.

Brenda Poole (Raceland): Keep redfish and speckled trout with
gamefish status.

Felix Poole (Raceland): Keep redfish and speckled trout with gamefish status.

Kurt Billiot (Lockport): Keep redfish and speckled trout with
gamefish status.

Pamela Billiot (Lockport): Keep redfish and speckled trout
with gamefish status.

<u>Larry Robicheaux</u> (Larose): Feels it is too soon to open redfish for commercial harvest and that the five quota limit is fine.

Millard Byrd (Baton Rouge): Catching few, if any, redfish on his fishing trips and does not want to see any changes made now.

<u>Dr. Dave McKowen</u> (Baton Rouge): Keep redfish limit as it is and do away with gill net fishermen.

Bob Stuart (Baton Rouge): Keep redfish as it is and do away
with gill netters.

<u>Don Fuselier</u> (LaPlace): Keep redfish and speckled trout as gamefish and do away with gill netters.

Wayne Vasseur (St. Rose): Keep redfish as a sport fish.

Tommy Gayle (Prairieville): Keep redfish as a gamefish.

Terry Mabile (St. John Parish): Keep redfish and speckled trout as a gamefish.

<u>Winn Lodriques</u> (LaPlace): Keep redfish and speckled trout as gamefish, and keep the quotas the same. If make any changes, should increase the minimum size limit from 12 inches to 14 inches.

Bob Davis (Luling): Keep redfish and speckled trout as gamefish.

<u>Richard Tannehill</u> (Baton Rouge): Keep redfish quotas as they are, and do away with gill netters completely.

Glen Brady (St. John the Baptist Parish): Keep redfish quotas as they are and keep the gamefish status for redfish. Would like to see speckled trout become a sport fish.

<u>Craig Matherne</u> (Boutte): Keep gamefish status for redfish. Let the commercial industry harvest redfish through redfish hatcheries.

<u>Vernon Robicheaux</u>: Keep gamefish status for redfish and keep the limit at 5.

Richard Duhon (Reserve): Keep redfish as a gamefish.

W. R. Edmonds, Jr. (Baton Rouge): Keep the limit and minimum size on redfish the same.

<u>Bobby LeBlanc</u> (Baton Rouge): Leave the redfish limit alone for recreational fishermen.

<u>Rick Edmonds</u> (Baton Rouge): Against reducing the limit on redfish.

Malcolm Callegan (Gonzales): Keep redfish limit as it is.

Rusty Tucker (Baton Rouge): Keep redfish limit as it is.

Mark Desoto (Baton Rouge): Keep redfish limit the same.

Price Redmond (Baton Rouge): Leave redfish limit along.

<u>Patrick Tullier</u> (Baton Rouge): Keep the redfish limit the same and outlaw gill netting.

Raymond O'Neal (Marrero): In opposition of lowering the redfish limit from 5 fish.

Kris Chabert (Cutoff): In opposition of lowering the redfish
limit from 5 fish.

Al Laporte, Jr. (Baton Rouge): Keep the redfish limit the same and outlaw gill netters.

<u>Laura Smith</u> (Baton Rouge): Keep the redfish limit and status the same and outlaw gill netting.

<u>Gary Bourgeois</u> (Baton Rouge): Raise the limit on redfish and keep gill netters out.

<u>Harold Long</u> (Destrehan): Do not lower the redfish limit from 5 to 2 for recreational fishermen in order for the commercial fishermen to have a season and leave redfish with gamefish status.

Mike Adams (Lafourche Parish): Leave redfish limit as it is.

<u>Hansen Scobee</u> (Baton Rouge): Against lowering the limits for redfish.

A. K. McInnis (Baton Rouge): Against lowering the limits for redfish.

Ray Jacob (Norco): Would like to see redfish kept with gamefish status; need to enforce the laws better. Felt the public notice for the meeting was unethical. Supports Mr. Jenkins' motions.

Vince Matherne (Luling): Keep the redfish limit the same.

<u>Chris Friloux</u> (Luling): Against lowering the limit on redfish.

<u>Della Gisclair</u>: Keep the five fish limit on redfish for recreational fishermen.

Mark Broussard (Luling): Against lowering the limit on redfish.

Scott Galliano (Marrero): Against lowering the limit on redfish.

Sidney Posecai (Metairie): Keep redfish limit the same.

<u>Charles Tassin</u> (Mandeville): Against lifting the ban on redfish to have a commercial harvest.

Sergent Larouse: Keep redfish limit at five.

Malcolm Zeringue (Waggaman): Keep redfish limit at five.

<u>Curtis Williams</u> (Paradis): Against lowering the limit on redfish for sport fishermen.

<u>Laurie Collier</u> (New Orleans): Against lifting the ban on redfish.

<u>Fredrick Sciortino</u> (New Orleans): Against lifting the ban on redfish.

Francis Comeaux (Kenner): Against lifting the ban on redfish.

<u>Wade Howes</u> (Raceland): Leave redfish quota as it is and leave redfish as a sportfish.

Ray Gandolfi (Metairie): Against lifting the ban on commercial fishing of redfish.

Marlin Daray (Metairie): Against lifting the ban on commercial fishing of redfish.

Sheryl Belanger (New Orleans): Against lifting the ban on commercial fishing of redfish.

<u>Bill Jolly</u> (Metairie): Against lifting the ban on commercial fishing of redfish.

<u>Peggy Carson</u> (Metairie): Against lifting the ban on commercial fishing of redfish.

Sharon Broussard (Luling): Leave limit on redfish at five.

Douglas Hymel: Remain gamefish status for redfish.

Dudley Orgeron: Remain gamefish status for redfish.

Joyce Woodruff (Waggaman): Remain the same for redfish.

<u>Kenneth Barlow</u> (Gretna): Totally against the lifting of the ban on redfish for commercial harvest.

# LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

BOARD MEETING

FEBRUARY 4, 1993

BERT H. JONES CHAIRMAN

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

the discussion to the Operation Game Thief service and asked that the telephone number be distributed to the commercial industry. Chairman Jones felt that the Department had done a good job in citing violators and stressed the need for these cases to get to the judicial system.

Mr. Donald Kinnair, President of the Plaquemines Parish Oyster Association, commented on a problem in the Lake Borgne and Mississippi Sound area with Mississippi boats coming in and fishing the reefs and going back to Mississippi. Then he requested that enforcement keep putting the pressure on the Mississippi fishermen.

Mr. Al Sunseri, owner of an oyster dealership in New Orleans, asked if enforcement could help with the legality of the Mississippi dealers getting Louisiana oysters and bringing them back to Mississippi. A question was, do these fishermen have to abide by Louisiana rules? Clarification was needed as to exactly what the law reads. Mr. Sincere thanked the Enforcement Division for the help on the recent oyster case.

The Red Drum Report was the next topic and discussion began with Mr. John Roussel giving a brief history of the report. Section 6 of Title 56 and also House Concurrent Resolution 277 of 1991 requires the Commission report to the Legislature annually on the status of red drum. Three separate issues should be addressed:

1) biological condition profile and stock assessment; 2) the total allowable catch with probable allocations scenarios; and 3) a detailed explanation of whether or not gamefish status should be continued. The Department staff prepared a report for the Commission to consider in fulfilling this obligation. Then Mr. Roussel introduced Mr. Joey Shepard to review the stock assessment and the characterization of the current status of the stock. Mr. Joey Shepard began his presentation at this time explaining the graphs and charts that are in the report.

Commissioner Jenkins asked: Why purse seines could not cause particular age groups to be missing from the catch? If a purse seine could target a certain size fish? What does the decline in catch effort say for the years 1990 through 1992 and from 1987 through 1989? And, if the decline in 1988 through 1989 was due to the freeze? Commissioner Gisclair inquired if, in the years 1990 and 1991, the testing was more sophisticated. Commissioner Schneider questioned that, without actually sampling the offshore waters, there is no way to know which scenario is accurate. Commissioner Jenkins asked if the National Marine Fisheries Service was not going to do an assessment in 1993, and what was the difference between what the Department was recommending the National Marine Fisheries Service do and what will be done this year? Commissioner Jenkins then commented that the basic recommendation was no increase in current fishery mortality on red drum. Chairman Jones asked when the report was to be presented to the legislature.

Commissioner Jenkins asked if the report had peer review.

Mr. Roy Trahan asked if what Mr. Roussel was trying to say was that they do not have any more fish now than they had five years ago. Mr. Roussel advised that it was just the opposite, that there were many more fish and the recovery of the stock has been rapid. The uncertainty has been with where the Department was when the recovery started.

Commissioner Schneider stated, if we had not done anything, we would not have any fish, but asked if what we did do was worth it. Commissioner Jenkins stated that was the case in all fishery decline business. Chairman Jones asked for questions from the Commission. Commissioner Gisclair asked if the report to be submitted to the legislature had to have peer review.

Commissioner Mialjevich asked for an explanation to the statement, "if there was complete compliance with the current bag limit, an allocation of approximately 60,000 fish to the commercial fishery would be possible under Scenario 1 and approximately 125,000 fish under Scenario 2, without any change in the current daily bag limit". He then stated that, if the recreational bag limit was strictly enforced, there would be a harvestable amount of fish for the commercial industry.

Commissioner Jenkins asked about a recreational survey being conducted; if it was a federal survey, if the state had a current recreational survey, and if there were any plans for one in the future? He then proceeded to ask if, when they interview a fisherman, do they ask how many redfish he caught, how many he caught and killed or caught and released or just caught, and, when using these numbers, you are actually using fish that were caught and killed.

Commissioner Schneider asked why something was not done back in the 70's and then commented he wanted to be sure we did not have another crisis like we just went through or are going through. Commissioner Jenkins then asked, if the juvenile fish had been checked at that time, would you have known that they were gone? Commissioner Schneider questioned, in order to gain confidence, what exactly will need to be done, how much time elapses between the taking of the fish?

Chairman Jones asked for public comments.

Mr. Tee Roy Bourg said, if the sportfisherman would not get over the limit there would be enough for commercial fishermen to harvest, why not let the commercial fishermen catch the fish and make a living off of it? Mr. Jim Bourge commented the only thing he requested was that the Commission take into account the provisions of Act 708, that anything that will be recommended should be in a fair and equitable manner to everybody.

An unidentified person stated that there was a need for a commercial fishery to prove the numbers of fish being caught. Then he added, why not have an allocation and check these fish and get your proper year classes?

Commissioner Mialjevich asked if fishermen would be allowed an allocation for commercial fishing and it was feasibly possible, would they be willing to take observers on the boats; did you read the report; wondered who did receive the report, and then asked if copies could be distributed to the people?

Chairman Jones commented the report was prepared for the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission. Commissioner Jenkins stated that this was a Commission action, and until the Commission accepts the report, there is no report. Then he requested, in the future, getting this report a little earlier and commented the Commission should try to get the legislature to change the requirement from March 1st to April or May. Commissioner Schneider also commented the report was a lot better than last year and thanked the staff.

Commissioner Mialjevich requested that, in the future, someone provide the public with an opportunity to view pertinent documents that will be discussed before the meeting.

Mr. Henry Mouton commented about recreational fishermen exceeding the bag limit, stating that there will always be a few bad apples in every tree.

Mr. Roy Trahan remarked Mr. Mouton was right about the bad apples, but compared the differences in fines for recreational violators and commercial violators. He then asked the Commission to reach an agreement where both recreational and commercial fishermen could benefit.

Mr. Ted Loupe wondered how long it would take before the fish start affecting our crab and our shrimp industry if we allow these fish to keep coming. Commissioner Jenkins asked, if year's ago before anybody knew what a redfish was, and there apparently were a lot of redfish, do you think the redfish affected the shrimp and crab crops back then, when they were plentiful? Mr. Loupe responded he felt it did and then asked, if you get rid of all the commercial fishermen, what will happen with all the fish?

Commissioner Mialjevich inquired, what are the fish eating, has there been a study on how much shrimp or crabs these fish eat

per day, and if we are bordering on upsetting the balance of nature?

Commissioner Cormier commented he heard a redfish eats 1/2 of its weight in shrimp and crabs per day and then said that the public should have access to this information.

Mr. Dave LeJeune mentioned he has seen a 3 or 4 pound redfish with close to a pound of shrimp in it and felt the fish are eating a lot of the crab and shrimp.

Mr. Ted Loupe suggested asking for a limited commercial fishery of a couple hundred thousand pounds so the staff can better assess the stock. Commissioner Jenkins commented this fish was a gamefish and the Commission could not do that. Then Mr. Loupe asked the Commission to recommend to the legislature the removal of gamefish status. Commissioner Jenkins read what the law said and the portion of the report that pertains to gamefish status. Mr. Loupe again asked if the Commission could not recommend to the legislature to remove gamefish status. Commissioner Jenkins stated that the item could be put on an agenda for discussion.

Mr. Harry Brown from Cameron, Louisiana asked, if one fish was taken away from the recreational people and applied this fish to the commercial harvest, how many fish would there be? Then Mr. Brown continued with asking the Commission to consider the possibility of taking 2 fish from the recreational fisherman and giving these to the commercial fisherman, stating you would have about 300,000 fish.

Mr. Steve Keffe, Jr. a practicing CPA spoke next. Comments Mr. Keffe made were, in the future, put "Draft for discussion purposes only" on reports such as this one so it can be discussed; and the Commission does have the authority to recommend or not recommend that gamefish status remain. Then Mr. Keffe polled each Commission member as to his understanding of their authority.

Commissioner Jenkins advised that this was a public comment period, not a question and answer period.

Mr. Henry Truelove asked Mr. Herring about the status of the Marine Finfish Panel he was appointed to serve on. Then Mr. Truelove read a resolution which asked the Commission to direct the Department staff to develop a plan to implement a commercial harvest of red drum and to encourage the Legislature to adopt a resolution instructing the Department to implement this plan.

Commissioner Mialjevich asked if there was a need for somebody to make a motion to accept this? Commissioner Jenkins reminded Commissioner Mialjevich that this was public comment time. Commissioner Jenkins made a motion to accept the Department's report as the Commission report and forward it on to the legislature before the March 1st deadline. Commissioner Schneider seconded the motion.

Chairman Jones asked for comments. Commissioner Gisclair requested to amend the motion that, along with sending the report, a recommendation be sent for the legislature to look at the gamefish status and perhaps change it from a gamefish status. Commissioner Mialjevich seconded the amended motion.

Commissioner Jenkins remarked that was not an agenda item, in his opinion. Commissioner Mialjevich stated it was in the report. Commissioner Jenkins stated it was not in the report; that making a recommendation on gamefish status has nothing to do with the agenda item.

Chairman Jones restated Commissioner Jenkins' motion that was on the floor and asked Commissioner Gisclair for his proposed amended motion. Commissioner Gisclair asked that the legislature reconsider the gamefish status of the redfish. Chairman Jones felt that these motions appeared to be two different issues. Commissioner Gisclair commented it was in the report and was number 3 in the report.

Commissioner Jenkins asked Commissioner Gisclair, instead of submitting the report as proposed do we change the part of the report the Department made on gamefish status and ask the Legislature to reconsider gamefish status? Commissioner Gisclair remarked that the legislature should read the report as it is but also, the Commission should ask the legislature to consider changing the status of redfish.

Chairman Jones asked Mr. Mike Landrum for his opinion on the motion and the amended motion. Mr. Landrum mentioned it sounded more like a substitute motion and then felt it was not a proper item on the agenda and to move forward would mean having to take other action. Commissioner Gisclair decided then to put it on the agenda for the next meeting.

Commissioner Mialjevich asked Mr. Landrum, if the Commission would ask the legislature not to change gamefish, but to look into the validity of it, and a commercial harvest, could that be tacked on to this report at a later date and made part of it? Then Commissioner Mialjevich asked, was there any way he could add into this report that the legislature look at specific items? Commissioner Mialjevich tried to understand Mr. Landrum by asking again that the report could not be changed or amended without public hearings or putting it on the agenda.

Chairman Jones called for the vote on the motion to approve the redfish plan to be presented to the legislature on the March 1st deadline. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Mialjevich made a motion to second Commissioner Gisclair's request that the matter be put on as an agenda item at the next meeting and that it be heard early on in the meeting.

The Secretary's Report to the Commission was given by Secretary Herring as the next item on the agenda. The Information & Education Division completed the 1991-92 annual report for the legislature; the July-August Louisiana Conservationist magazine will have a photo contest with the theme of Native Louisiana Habitat. Five Hunter Education Workshops were held which certified 16 educators and 350 students. The Aquatic Education Workshop certified 20 educators and arranged for Caddo Parish schools to have the program presented to them. An increase of Louisiana Conservationist subscriptions by 425 occurred during January.

The Shrimp Task Force had completed a draft for the Governor. A forum on by-catch was held at Southwestern University and Mr. Corky Perret presented a paper on this subject there. Mr. Perret was attending another meeting this week and presenting a paper also. The newly designed oyster tags have been distributed. The Marine Lab had been utilized by U.S. Soil Conservation Service and LSU as well.

Fish stockings in the Atchafalaya Basin are continuing. To date stockings are; 7,305 bass, 1,375,000 bream, 141,000 catfish, and 5,000 crappie. The water hyacinth's sprayed during the month totalled 421 acres and, with the mild winters this year and in the past, these plants have not stopped growing and we are anticipating problems.

The staff has been attending meetings on the budget, and have been hearing of cuts for the 1993-94 year.

Commissioner Jenkins asked Secretary Herring about expenditures and a breakdown of the different programs that will be utilizing the finfish marine license money.

Commissioner Mialjevich inquired of Secretary Herring, if he was correct to assume that, when the Department writes a report for the Commission, comments are made by the Commission and public, and then the Commission can not make any changes, that it has to be 100% okay or 100% rejection. Secretary Herring advised the Department was required to give the Commission a report and it was up to the Commission to do what they want with the report.

Mike Landrum reminded Commissioner Mialjevich of the question posed, which was whether the issue of the Commission making a

recommendation to the legislature was properly on the agenda and stated it was not.

Commissioner Jenkins stated the Commission had been through this discussion already. Commissioner Mialjevich made a motion to include the resolution as part of the report and reopen it.

Secretary Herring asked if you could add something to the agenda by bringing it up and getting a majority vote of the Commission. Commissioner Gisclair informed that it was according to Roberts Rules of Order.

Commissioner Mialjevich made a motion to suspend the rules. Commissioner Vujnovich seconded the motion.

Commissioner Jenkins explained to Commissioner Cormier what Commissioner Mialjevich was trying to do.

Chairman Jones asked for a vote, by hand. Commissioner Vujnovich, Commissioner Mialjevich and Commissioner Gisclair raised their hands. Then Commissioner Jenkins stated it was not a two-thirds majority, and it would not be brought back up.

Chairman Jones called for **Public Comments**. Col. Vidrine handed out a report on Operation Game Thief, then Col. Charlie Clark read a resolution from the Louisiana Wildlife Agents Association.

Mr. Ted Loupe again asked why the Commission could not vote on having gamefish status removed from redfish so commercial fishermen could have a harvest and then mentioned there was no discussion at the meeting even though it was in the report.

Then Commissioner Jenkins made a motion to Adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Commissioner Schneider.

Joe L. Herri

Secretary

JLH:sch

### COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEM FOR SPECIAL COMMISSION MEETING

### February 25, 1993

Robert Beck (Luling): Keep redfish and speckled trout with gamefish status permanently in Louisiana and not allow commercial fishermen to take 3 away from recreational fishermen, so the commercial fishermen can start netting again.

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Larry Robicheaux (Larose): Feels it is too soon to open redfish for commercial harvest and that the five quota limit is fine.

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Dr. Dave McKowen (Baton Rouge): Keep redfish limit as it is
) and do away with gill net fishermen.

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} gamefish and do away with gill netters.

Wayne Vasseur (St. Rose): Keep redfish as a sport fish.

- Tommy Gayle (Prairieville): Keep redfish as a gamefish.
- Terry Mabile (St. John Parish): Keep redfish and speckled trout as a gamefish.
- Winn Lodrigues (LaPlace): Keep redfish and speckled trout as gamefish, and keep the quotas the same. If make any changes, should increase the minimum size limit from 12 inches to 14 inches.
- Bob Davis (Luling): Keep redfish and speckled trout as gamefish.
- Richard Tannehill (Baton Rouge): Keep redfish quotas as they are, and do away with gill netters completely.
- Glen Brady (St. John the Baptist Parish): Keep redfish quotas as they are and keep the gamefish status for redfish. Would like to see speckled trout become a sport fish.
- Craig Matherne (Boutte): Keep gamefish status for redfish.

  Let the commercial industry harvest redfish through redfish hatcheries.
- Vernon Robicheaux: Keep gamefish status for redfish and keep the limit at 5.
- Richard Duhon (Reserve): Keep redfish as a gamefish.
- W. R. Edmonds, Jr. (Baton Rouge): Keep the limit and minimum size on redfish the same.
- Bobby LeBlanc (Baton Rouge): Leave the redfish limit alone for recreational fishermen.
- Rick Edmonds (Baton Rouge): Against reducing the limit on redfish.
  - Malcolm Callegan (Gonzales): Keep redfish limit as it is.
    - Rusty Tucker (Baton Rouge): Keep redfish limit as it is.
    - Mark Desoto (Baton Rouge): Keep redfish limit the same.
      - Price Redmond (Baton Rouge): Leave redfish limit along.
- Patrick Tullier (Baton Rouge): Keep the redfish limit the same and outlaw gill netting.
- Raymond O'Neal (Marrero): In opposition of lowering the redfish limit from 5 fish.

- Kris Chabert (Cutoff): In opposition of lowering the redfish
  limit from 5 fish.
- Al Laporte, Jr. (Baton Rouge): Keep the redfish limit the same and outlaw gill netters.
- Laura Smith (Baton Rouge): Keep the redfish limit and status the same and outlaw gill netting.
- Gary Bourgeois (Baton Rouge): Raise the limit on redfish and keep gill netters out.
- Harold Long (Destrehan): Do not lower the redfish limit from 5 to 2 for recreational fishermen in order for the commercial fishermen to have a season and leave redfish with gamefish status.
  - Mike Adams (Lafourche Parish): Leave redfish limit as it is.
- Hansen Scobee (Baton Rouge): Against lowering the limits for redfish.
- A. K. McInnis (Baton Rouge): Against lowering the limits for redfish.
- Ray Jacob (Norco): Would like to see redfish kept with gamefish status; need to enforce the laws better. Felt the public notice for the meeting was unethical. Supports Mr. Jenkins' motions.
  - Vince Matherne (Luling): Keep the redfish limit the same.
- Chris Friloux (Luling): Against lowering the limit on redfish.
- Della Gisclair: Keep the five fish limit on redfish for recreational fishermen.
- Mark Broussard (Luling): Against lowering the limit on redfish.
- Scott Galliano (Marrero): Against lowering the limit on redfish.
  - Sidney Posecai (Metairie): Keep redfish limit the same.
  - Charles Tassin (Mandeville): Against lifting the ban on redfish to have a commercial harvest.
    - Sergent Larouse: Keep redfish limit at five.
      - Malcolm Zeringue (Waggaman): Keep redfish limit at five.

5 Curtis Williams (Paradis): Against lowering the limit on redfish for sport fishermen.

Laurie Collier (New Orleans): Against lifting the ban on redfish.

Fredrick Sciortino (New Orleans): Against lifting the ban on redfish.

Francis Comeaux (Kenner): Against lifting the ban on redfish.

<u>Wade Howes</u> (Raceland): Leave redfish quota as it is and leave redfish as a sportfish.

Ray Gandolfi (Metairie): Against lifting the ban on commercial fishing of redfish.

Sheryl Belanger (New Orleans): Against lifting the ban on commercial fishing of redfish.

Bill Jolly (Metairie): Against lifting the ban on commercial fishing of redfish.

Peggy Carson (Metairie): Against lifting the ban on commercial fishing of redfish.

Sharon Broussard (Luling): Leave limit on redfish at five.

<u>Douglas Hymel</u>: Remain gamefish status for redfish.

ban on redfish for commercial harvest.

63 <u>Dudley Orgeron</u>: Remain gamefish status for redfish.

Joyce Woodruff (Waggaman): Remain the same for redfish.

Kenneth Barlow (Gretna): Totally against the lifting of the

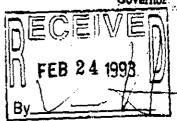
Dear Best, at the conclusion of testimony cone Red Drum, it is suggested that you announce a brief (5 minute) reces, afterwhich discussion of extending the 92-93 Trapping Sason in South east the will be considered by the Commission All guest are united to stay for that discussion of Euroseuscy.

. ....



Joe L. Hening Secretary Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Post Office Box 98000 Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000 (504) 765-2800

Edwin W. Edwards



February 24, 1993

MEMORANDUM

TO:

Glen Cormier

TROM:

Resen Foots Assistant Administrator VF

Marina Fisheries Division

SUBJECT:

1991 Louisiana Landings (Commercial)

Per your request, the following are the preliminary figures for 1991 Louisiana landings, as provided by the National Marine Fisheries Service:

1991 recu	ational	1991 Pounds	pounds	
188,855	Sheepshead	2,425,138	2,767,046	
100,065	Black drum Red drum	1,914,090	a,774,114 104,158	
6,180,714 <del>&lt;</del> 413,500		1,220,231 692,338	449,034 455,718	
		6,251,797	6,750,070	

cc: John Roussel

Fubb: Landings . 91

1991

There needs to be \_\_\_\_\_ a black drum status report.

FAX TRANSMITTAL
TO: Bert Jones
FAX#
FROM Swan Hawkins
RE: Jesse Fortenot's Verbation
Transcript
·



DATE:	3/8/	93	
TIME SENT			
FOR INFORM	MATION CAL	LL (504) 765- 2806	
OUR FAX #	(504) 765-26	607	
PAGES TO F	OLLOW	2	

### SPECIAL COMMISSION MEETING February 25, 1993

Jesse Fontenot from St. Mary Parish, I represent the East St. For many times, I have spoke Mary Parish Chamber of Commerce. represent the commercial and the recreational. I chair a committee for the Chamber, wildlife and fisheries committees, committees, for several years and also the St. Mary Industrial Group. I went to Washington with the commercial when they went on the TED's, I have attended every meeting they had on the TED and I spoke at one meeting. So, I have been around quite a bit for quite a few years and have always hoped someday relations would be better between commercial and recreation. In the past, we have had a lot of problem, in fact, I have supported commercial pretty much until Tee John Mialjevich brought the United States Intercoastal Waterway for two days and a little later on for another day, then I kind of lost interest in the organization. I told Tee John, whatever I talk about today, I don't want that to hurt our There have been a lot of talk about the redfish friendship. affecting 30,000 commercial fishermen. In 1990, there was 208,292 saltwater licenses sold. There was 2,515 gill net licenses sold plus 1,453 out-of-state licenses. Making a survey, the Chamber of Commerce in Morgan City, working with the Wildlife and Fisheries and LSU came up with a figure where half was saltwater and half of the gill net was freshwater. So using that figure, using that figure, will give you 1,984 saltwater gill nets sold between both of them, between the out-of-state and in the state, will give you a total of affecting the Louisiana commercial fishermen of 1,267. The last year Louisiana commercial fish redfish, they harvested 1,600,000 in 176 days. That is an average of 4.58 per person per day which would be at \$4.58. They talk about the gill net do not damage fish, I disagree with them. I have some pictures here I would like to bring up. This gill net was dated, what was the date on that Bert, '91? (Mr. Jenkins answered 1/3/91.) That particular net where you see five fish floating on top of the water had 44 gill net. The people that were fishing, came and run it a little They said they were fishing for speckled trout and while later. this reef they were fishing, I have been fishing speckled trout there, I have been redfishing there for many years, I had never caught a speckled trout. He said they been catching a lot of speckled trout there before. So, I am sure that is what he was fishing for, for speckled trout. But I assure you, and this is not the only picture I have seen by, many times in the area. heard about the redfish eating all the shrimp and the crab, I sure would like for the Wildlife and Fisheries to make people check the crab trap in that area, that is in the Atchafalaya Bay, Four Leaf Bay and Cote Blanche Bay. The crab is very, very small right now and they are catching an awful lot of them. So, it ain't just the crab, the redfish eating the crab. The fishermen are eating a bunch of them also. One guy talked here, gave a report a while ago of seafood industry was \$144,000,000. It would be hard for me to believe that just a few, 4 or 5 million dollars worth of fish, would help them very much if they already catching that many fish.

Redfish is about 1/3 of 1% of the seafood industry. Tee John, if you disagree with that check with the Wildlife and Fisheries and I know it probably could give a report on that. Louisiana had 899,000 people fishing in 1992, so it's very urgent for us to continue protecting the redfish. I think in the future, I hope someday that ya'll do come up, I agree very much with what some of the people talk about, why can't we have both of them, commercial and recreation. I'd support that very strong in the future but before I would support it, I'd want to see a plan where it is going to work. I don't want to see a plan where you see nets like that full of dead redfish. Whenever that plan is proven to me, I would very much support fishing for commercial and recreational. It had never been proven yet though. St. Mary Parish is a parish with 138 policemen in the parish and the cities. We have 3 agents to represent the whole parish, so we do have a very big problem. hope in the future we can have better enforcement and better management than we have had in the past. Thank you.

Draft

### NEWS RELEASE

APPROVED:	

### AGENDA FOR SPECIAL COMMISSION MEETING

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission has called a special meeting to be held at \_\_\_\_\_\_A.M. on , 1993, at the Wildlife and Fisheries Building, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA. The Commission has set the following agenda for the special meeting.

- 1. Roll Call
- 2. Red Drum Report; Including Commission Recommendation to Legislature Relative to Gamefish Status of Red Drum

Post-It™ brand fax transmitta	al memo 7671 # of pages ▶
To Best Jones	From Susan
Co.	Co.
Dept.	Phone # 765-2806
Fax #	Fax #

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FISHERIES

TO:

**2**6001/001

- whereas, biological data from recent years shows that current fishing pressure has and will continue to improve the red drum populations now and into the future; and
- WHERHAS, the designation of "gamefish" as it relates to the current status of red drum is of little biological utility, but rather it is a political approach to allocation; and
- WHEREAS, 81% of Louisiana voters surveyed in a 1991 statewide pollindicated a preference for a redfish management policy based on a commercial harvest that would enable them to buy Louisiana redfish in restaurants and grocery stores; and
- NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Wildlife and Fisherics Commission, recommend that the Secretary and his appropriate staff develop a plan to implement a commercial harvest of red drum;
- <u>ne it further Resolved</u>, that the plan provide for the equitable allocation of the available harvest between the commercial and recreational fisheries based on the historical distribution of the catch;
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this plan be prepared on or before January 1, 1994; and
- <u>BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED</u>, that this plan incorporate recommendations for strict controls and regulations which may include, but not be limited to, the establishment of a permit system, limited entry system or a tagging system; and
- FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED, that, we, the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, encourage the legislature to adopt a resolution instructing the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to implement this plan.

February 22, 1993

NEWS RELEASE

APPROVED

### AGENDA FOR SPECIAL COMMISSION MEETING

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission has called a special meeting to be held at 2:00 P.M. on Thursday, February 25, 1993, in the Louisiana Room at the Wildlife and Fisheries Building, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA. The Commission has set the following agenda for the special meeting:

- 1. Roll Call
- 2. Red Drum Report; Including Commission Recommendation to Legislature Relative to Gamefish Status of Red Drum

Joe Herring Susan Susan Susan Tre

Draft

### NEWS RELEASE

APPROVED: Sut // Jors

### AGENDA FOR SPECIAL COMMISSION MEETING

2:00 P.H Feb 25

- 1. Roll Call
- 2. Red Drum Report; Including Commission Recommendation to legislature Relative to Gamefish Status of Red Drum

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	Co
Dept	765-2806
Pax #	Par A

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The Commission - 2:00 P.M - Feb 25

will be our special Commission meeting 
Above Agendaris approved - Let's kick

Civil Service out in the attennoon - Muybe

they can go to 4th Floor for Attennoon 
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### NEWS RELEASE

APPROVED: Sut // Jons

### ACKNDA FOR SPECIAL COMMISSION MEETING

2:00 PM Feb 25

- 1. Roll Call
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Civil Service out in the attennoon - Maybe

they can go to 4th Floor for Afternoon 
Rent

Approvals:

Joe Herring
Maurice Cockerham 2/22

### WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION ADDRESSES GAMEFISH STATUS OF REDFISH

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission has called a Special Meeting for 2:00 p.m., Thursday, February 25 to discuss the commission's report to the Louisiana Legislature on the status of Red Drum (Redfish) in Louisiana waters.

Of particular concern is the question of continued "gamefish" status for Red Drum, or the resumption of commercial fishing for the species.

The meeting will be held in the Louisiana Room of the department's headquarters building at 2000 Quail Drive in Baton Rouge.

The agenda for the Special Meeting includes:

- 1. Roll Call
- Red Drum Report: Including Commission Recommendation to Legislature Relative to Gamefish Status of Red Drum (Redfish).

### Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

### **NEWS RELEASE**

Joe L. Herring Secretary



CONTACT (504) 765-2923

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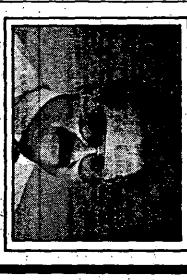
- 1. Roll Call
- 2. Red Drum Report: Including Commission Recommendation to Legislature Relative to Gamefish Status of Red Drum (Redfish).

# OUTDOORS

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### TISHING REPORT



OUTDOORS

### Freshwater fish moving to spawn

water right now. Let's be honest: We've all been running into days when "You should have been here yesterday" fits the time we're spending on the

see towards the end of March; and, third, rain and we're having weather conditions we usuall the move; second, it's the last week of February winter and freshwater and saltwater fish are on enough every five or six days to keep water not the deluge we had in January, but just Three reasons: First, we've had another mild

and setting up nests on broad, shallow flats — It to spawn. While that should make both bass and put freshwater fish into an uncontrollable urge levels moving up and down.

The result of all those factors have definitely sac-a-lait a little easier to find — you'll can see them moving in shallow water along the banks

# Redfish status prompts special LWFC meeting

By JOS MACALUSO Advocate outdoors writer

meeting, the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission has scheduled a special meeting today at 2 p.m. to discuss its recommendations on the status of redfish Following a heated discussion on the topic at its Feb. 4

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries headquarters on Qual The meeting will be held in the Louisiana Room of the

LDWF), to present a Redlish Status Report to the State By law, the commission is required, through the Marine Finfish Section of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries egislature by March 1.

matter needed to be resolved before the March 1 Legislative-Because discussion of removing the "gamefish" status of redfish — recreational fishermen-only catch — was not on commission is not scheduled to meet again until March 4, the the agenda for the Feb. 4 meeting, and because the That deadline precipitated the call for the special meeting

at the Feb. 4 meeting with the recommendation of "no ncrease in current fishing mortality rates on red drum LDWF biologists presented the report to the commission

redfish)."
To fulfill other requirements of the state statute which

gave gamefish status to redfish, the biologists also included an example based on allowing a commercial allocation from the existing stock of redfish in state waters

reduction in the recreational bag limit . . . would be to four allocation of 100,000 fish (redfish) is chosen, the appropriate per person per day." "For example," the report stated, "if a commercial

February meeting, that further state and federal research recreational limits, while still allowing a commercia That projection was based on the figures derived from the first of two redfish models developed by LDWF biologists. In was needed to determine which of the two models best fits harvest. LDWF biologists admitted to the commission at the ouisiana's redish population. second model, there would be no reduction in the daily

part, directs the LWFC to give a "detailed explanation of whether or not gamefish status should be continued." he LWFC follow the mandate of the Legislature which, in Commercial fishermen at the February meeting insisted

Mialjevich and Perry Gisclair, who are involved despite the objections of LWFC members Tee John commercial fishing interests and agreed with No such recommendation was made at the meeting,

needed to be on the agenda in order to call for a debate and vote on the issue. Since it wasn't, Jones ruled there would be Commission chairman Bert Jones declared that the item

no action taken by the LWFC on the recommendation. failed and he, along with Gisclair, placed the item on the could be brought to a vote if the seven-man commission had a agenda for the March 4 meeting two-thirds majority to suspend the rules. Mialjevich's motion Landrum, who agreed with Jones, but added that the item Miallevich sought a ruling from LDWF attorney Mike

biological utility, but rather a social or political approach" to commercial season be reopened, because ". . . is of little illocating the resource. The biologists report stopped short of suggesting that a

status of redfish or not, the final decision will rest in **Louisiana Legislature** Whether the LWFC recommends a chance in the gamefish using of redfish or not, the final decision will rest in the

"The commission will only make a recommendation," said Henry Mouton, an avid recreational fishermen and Gulf Coast Conservation Association activist from Lafayette. The final decision will be made in the Legislature.

supposed to be a nine-year program to study redfish growth," be sure that nine years is enough to study Mouton continued. "At this stage of the program, we need to "My concern is that we're in the fourth year of what's

fishery is, and where it's going. We don't want additional pressure on the resource if the resource can't stand it," stopped short of a goal, to stop short and not know where the douton said "We don't want the program to stop in midstream, to be



## for turkey seasor t's time to prepare

We've been reading and writing about erappie and Muscilla and up on the control